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NEW TABLES OF STONE

AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY

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To

THE FRIENDS WHO HAVE CALLED FOR

AND CAUSED

THIS PUBLICATION

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NEW TABLES OF STONE

NEW TABLES OF STONE

THE ancient world made much of sacred mountains. Many such there were, from the great Meru of Hindu imagination, down to Helicon, Ida, and a dozen different heights called Olympus. There the gods were thought to dwell or come. There they gave laws and revelations to men; — Ormuzd to Zoroaster on the high Persian mount, Zeus to Minos on the Cretan Dicte, Jehovah to Moses on Sinai. There they showed themselves by storms; — from the great Olympian god whose attribute was the thunderbolt and whose common Homeric name was the "cloud-gatherer," to the god of Israel who proved his presence by "thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mount."

Poetic minds still find truth enough in such thoughts. In our own Colorado is a spot which even a prosaic generation has named "the garden of the gods"; and on the high mountain-peak overlooking it, the sights of old story are often seen. There, too, that "thick *cloud* upon the mount" still comes, —

sometimes so quickly that the shining peak, where none seems possible that day, is the next minute buried by it. Something like a miracle still seems wrought there. The method of it may be explained, but the power behind the method remains as mysterious as in Moses' time. Modern science has even increased the marvel. It tells us that what seemed a mere cloud is a galaxy of millions of mist-spheres, each rounded as perfectly as a planet, and all made from vapor that has perhaps been gathered from furthest seas. Still more the wonder grows when we hear about the substance of the cloud. Some tell us that the minutest mote of mist is composed of more atoms than a man could count in a month; and that each of these atoms is moving several miles in a second, continually colliding with others, rebounding, never resting. Some physicists even teach that each atom, though many million times smaller than any microscope could show, is yet in structure probably a curious vortex-ring, such as you see puffed from the mouth of a professional smoker or from the stack of a locomotive, but imperishable and revolving forever. The cloud seems much more miraculous after science has explained it, than before.

There on the Colorado mount, the *lightnings*, too, still come as in old stories. While I was descending,

without thought of storm, there suddenly came a terrific flash and crash, as if the Olympian Zeus and Sinaitic Jehovah were both still living right there on Pike's Peak. The ancients would have heard in it the voice of a god, and the moderns might, as well; for, with all our electrical science, the inner secret of the lightning is not in the least understood. Its marvels, too, have greatly multiplied. It is found able, not merely to flash from the near clouds, but to fly invisible across the continent or under the ocean; to do the most powerful or the most delicate work, from drawing railway-trains to delivering strains of music in distant towns. This power, which used so to terrify, was yet ready to run around the world on our errands, to drive machinery all the day, to light our cities or sick-rooms all the night, and to serve us in countless ways which seem only beginning now to be found out. It is not only mightier than the gods of old story, but far more beneficent. The Roman Jove and Hebrew Jehovah seem both still here, and both much better than their ancient worshipers knew.

The Hebrew story told further how, on the mount, Moses received two "*tables of stone*," "the work of God," "written by the finger of God." It is not strange that such "tables" or tablets of laws were thought divine. The Roman "twelve tables" of

bronze were revered as "the fount of all law," and Cicero praised them as "a library of all the philosophers." Venerated tablets were often connected with the gods; and the Greek Dionysos also had his "two tables of stone." Sacred inscriptions were often ascribed to the literal hand of some god. Bunsen says portions of the Egyptian ritual "are expressly stated to have been written by the very finger of Thoth himself." All such stories are of course to be read with poetic freedom.

But, — speaking with the same freedom, — is nothing similar still to be seen in our own mountains? The very thing which named that "garden of the gods" is huge "tables of stone," set upright on edge or end, and curiously carved. It was proper enough to credit them to the gods, for they are the work of no men, but are ages older than Adam. They have come from the Creator as much as did the tables in the Mosaic story, and have been "graven" by the creative tools of rain and frost and wind. Elsewhere, too, the mountains abound in still greater ones, heaved and hewn as by a divine hand. A creative power, no less mysterious because called by some geologic name, has floored the continent with stone strata miles in thickness. A creative power, no less godlike because called gravity, has crumpled the continent like a leaf, raised

the Alleghany ridges and Rocky Mountain ranges as its wrinkles, broken and tilted the strata in Titanic tables, and graven them by storm and stream. The ancients called that creative power "God," and we have not yet coined any better name.

But even more notable than those great mountain tables are the myriads of small ones with which they are filled; — the curious *crystals* with their shining plates and prisms, their faces so perfect and lines so precise. In their varied forms, their finish and endurance, they quite outdo the tablets that man makes. Compare the slabs of ancient sculpture, or of yesterday, with the polished facets and perfect edges of a quartz crystal that has stood a million years. Often, too, crystals are as large as human tablets, and sometimes weigh a ton. But more curious are the minute ones, of countless forms, that have been built by the million into the mountains.

Nor need we go to the mountains to see them, but find them everywhere. They are embedded in the rock by the roadside. Their sea-worn relics of many hues shine in the sand beneath our feet. Their dainty flakes and fragments float and sparkle even in the dust above our heads. Or, if you wish the crystals whole and perfect, you will often find them glistening by the hundred in the cavity of a sand-grain in

the street, too minute to see without a glass, but as finished as if made for a coronation.

These tables, too, we may as well call *divine*. They are older than man, and not even understood by him. Mineralogists may explain them as a "symmetrical marshaling of molecules"; — but not even these long words account for the crystal in the least, and there still remains the question whence that wondrous marshaling came. Its cause is as much a mystery as ever, and might just as well be called God. Indeed, it was while speaking of this very thing that even Professor Tyndall turned aside to deny the charge of atheism, and to declare that the process of crystallization always and especially moved his mind to revere the miraculous power working through it. When we see how this power has paved the whole planet with tessellated granites and marble mosaics, and that the lines of its sculpture still remain everywhere, from the mountain rocks to the sand rolling in the sea, — we feel that the earth is filled with "tables of stone" no less divine than those of the Hebrew story.

They are tables of *law*, too, though the laws be only physical. Law is proclaimed in their every line and angle, and nowhere more clearly. The angles are of infinite diversity according to species, but each one is true to the fraction of a degree ordered at creation.

To those quartz crystals, for instance, the order was that one of the pyramid angles should be 103°: 34′; —and so it always is, whether coming from Alps or Andes. To the feldspar mingled with the quartz in the granite, the order was that one angle should be 63°: 57′; and so it always is. So with the innumerable varieties of minerals. Each has its own set of angles, but is hewn true to them, whether in the latest rocks or ages earlier. Long before Moses was born or Mount Sinai created, crystals with their unerring lines were showing, through all the earth, stone tables of laws that are never broken.

Nor are these laws without *ethical* meaning. Though only physical, they at least typify moral laws. What faithfulness is taught in those molecules arranging themselves so much more truly than the soldiers of any army, or than the angels of Dante's Eden! What a lesson of purity is taught by crystals casting out uncleanness! The beautiful Carrara marble, in the mountains, has its white masses surrounded by beds of dark matter which it has driven out in the process of crystallization. It seems to tell, as well as any preacher, to cast out inherited and inherent depravities. The worth of order and purity is taught still better in other minerals. Silicate of alumina, the substance of common clay, by the orderly arrangement of

crystallization, becomes the beryl which the apostle puts in the walls of the New Jerusalem; while in purer form it becomes the beautiful aqua-marine, and, in still purer, the emerald itself. Even carbon, the substance of foul coal and soot, by the same process comes to shine in diamonds that hardly kings can buy.

Ruskin said crystals show a "stern code of morals," and he wrote a whole book on "The Ethics of the Dust." He might have carried his lessons further had it then been known that every mist-speck in fog or cloud has a minute particle of dust as its nucleus, and that it never forms without this. Without the invisible motes floating in the upper air, we should not have the blessing of the cloud or the beauty of the sunset. Even the dust has its gospel, and the crystallization behind so much of it is full of "ethics."

Nor need we go to old rocks and relics to find crystals. Their creation is ever continued. They are still made, not only in the oceans, but in the air. On the mountain that day, though it was a midsummer noon, from the same sky that had shown its sudden miracle of cloud and lightning, there came floating down a myriad *snowflakes*. They were all made of crystals as curious as any in the rocks around me. Even more wonderful than those of old oceans and

ages, seemed these that were created so quickly in the cloud that covered the mountain but a few minutes. They were far more wonderful in structure, too. They showed not only as perfect forms, but these combined again into six-rayed stars, each ray enriched by rows of sparkling gems, and often feathered like a fern-frond, with each filament dusted with diamonds. These stars were again combined in clusters, and a single snowflake often contained a whole constellation of them.

As great a marvel as any constellation of the sky seemed these created so quickly in the air. The Creator was still present in the cloud. The same power that had globed great worlds in the heavens was here globing these of mist by the million, before my eyes and within arm's reach. The same power that had floored the earth with crystals was here filling the air with finer and more marvelous ones. The God who made "tables" for Moses was still making them, shaping them more beautiful than any Sinaitic slabs, and handing them down by the myriad from the very heavens.

"Tables of stone," too, they were in the eyes of science, however easily they might melt. They were all the more wonderful because melting so easily and made from mere water. For that water had been

pumped from salt seas a thousand leagues away; it had been freshened, distilled, purified in the process; it had been lifted higher than the mountain peaks and brought all this distance in the arms of the wind; it had been stored in the heavens, a vast ocean as invisible as spirit; it had suddenly materialized in the innumerable globes and galaxies of the cloud; it had crystallized in these wondrous stars, light as down, yet more perfect than cathedral walls. As they fell on the mountain that day, mysteriously dropped from heaven as from a divine hand, not merely quarried and carved in the skies, but newly created there, they seemed, no less than the tables of the Hebrew story, "the work of God" and graven "by the finger of God."

But that was only a midsummer scene. In other months they had been created so much more abundantly that old drifts of them lay a thousand feet below, surviving the suns of many summers. Nor need we go to the mountains to see them, but may watch them falling in our city streets. Literature, too, is full of them, — back to Virgil and Xenophon, and to Homer's dozen figures from snowfalls and flakes. Job counted them among the wonders of the Lord, and, referring to their mysterious source in the heavens, mocked man's inability to visit "the store-

houses of the snow." But the "storehouses" were nearer and stranger than Job knew, — not only in the heavens, but around our own heads, even in our houses. We read how, in cold climates, in the heated and moist air of a dancing-hall, a colder current sometimes makes the snowflakes quickly form and fall. The Creator of the crystalline mountains is right there in the ball-room. He may be found in almost any room, working the same creation on the window-pane, building the moisture of the breath into stars and feathery sprays.

For the snow does not exhaust this winter creation. Without the fall of a flake, these crystals are often formed by the million and hung in rich clusters to every twig and grass-blade, making any old fence-rail outshine a royal diadem. Here, too, the Creator is still at work. Thoreau said, "God exhibits himself in a frosted bush to-day, as much as he did in a burning one to Moses." All around us, from the autumn fields in a frosty morning, to the winter flakes from the clouds, and the filmy stars that drop from the clear sky upon our coats and cloaks, he is still handing down his "tables of stone."

They are still tables of law, too; and every flake declares it as clearly as the quartz. Each of its crystals, in its every angle, tells of laws older than Adam.

Moral laws, too, it seems to teach, as well as do Ruskin's crystals; and the "ethics of the dust" are surpassed by the *ethics of the snow.* Better than emerald or ruby do these snow-stars teach the beauty of order and purity; and, comparing our ornaments with them, Thoreau scornfully asked, "Where are the jewelers' shops?" Better than Carrara marble do they teach to cast out uncleanness; — for they have risen from brackish seas and filthy pools, and yet have left the foulness of those all behind. Born in depravity, they have been regenerated better than sinners at a revival meeting. Look down a city street on a cold winter morning, and you notice that the whitest spots are the mouths of the sewers. You see them shining half a mile away, clothed in cleanest crystals, which yet have come in the night from the foul liquids below. They seem to repeat that precept which the apostle made half of "pure religion," — to keep one's self "unspotted from the world."

Do they not teach some of the very commandments of the Hebrew "tables"? By showing how invisible and infinite is the divine power, they too tell us not to worship any other, and not to make "any graven image" thereof, whether in wooden carving or worded creeds and catechisms. They even suggest the commandments against violence and passion, by their lesson of

work so gentle, so peaceful, and yet so powerful. The snow crystal seems about the weakest thing in the world. Born of invisible vapor, falling silently and softly, lighter than the chemist can weigh, melted in a moment by a breath or a sunbeam, — what can it possibly do? Yet patiently they persist, dropping one by one until they whiten the lawn, cover the county, block the roads, stop the railway-trains, conquer the mighty locomotive; — while in mountains they pile in avalanches that can sweep off forests like stubble, or pack in glaciers that do still more stupendous work. Very gentle are those glaciers, too, — crawling down the valley slower than a snail, yet furrowing the rocks, grinding quartz into clay, cutting off the mountains like cheese, and changing the face of the continent.

Not only the power of patience and the law of peace, but co-operation and brotherly union, the snow-flake teaches. The juvenile rhyme makes it say to its brothers: —

> "One of us here would not be felt,
> One of us here would quickly melt; —
> But I'll help you and you help me,
> And then what a wonderful drift we'll see."

A "wonderful drift" indeed is one of those glaciers that are moving to-day in so many mountains and countries. Professor Wright says that the Muir

glacier in Alaska reaches the sea with a front something like a thousand feet thick, from which a block now and then breaks with a boom like a cannon, and sends waves to "lash the shore with foam two miles below." The great Greenland glacier is said to be five times as large as Minnesota, with one of its sea-fronts making for sixty miles "a solid glassy wall" whose falling fragments float away as mighty icebergs to frighten our summer tourists in mid-Atlantic. But even that is hardly worth mentioning beside the ancient glacier which is said once to have covered Canada and a large part of the United States, and which had an average depth of "three-fourths of a mile." That was a snowdrift to remember. We speak of lowering the ocean, as if that were the final absurdity; but a geologist estimates that, to get the snow for that glacier, all the oceans on earth had to be lowered one hundred and fifty feet. Or hear them tell what it did; — cutting down the Canadian mountains, shoving their moraines along to make our hills and inclose our lakes, grinding rocks into clay for farms, damming up great rivers and changing their course, digging out vast hollows to make lakes Michigan and Erie. Some think that the weight of that glacier even bent the crust of the earth, forced lava out of the Pacific mountains, as pressure does juice from an orange, —

and perhaps even helped to raise the mountains. All this, and more, they say, from these silent snowflakes that melt before a breath! These stone tables seem to teach that patient co-operation which is the aim of the decalogue.

They not only teach this law, but seem to sing the *beauty* of creation. People praise the "beautiful mantle" of the snow until we wish to hear no more of it. For a change, think of the mantle's fibers, — the flakes themselves, with their wondrous structure. Six-rayed stars, we have called them; but we would better say flowers, — celestial species of the six-petaled lily family, — airier lilies of the heavens, of more variety than those of earth. Still more marvelous these flowers become when we add the thought of their origin. Jesus well said, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow." But consider the *lilies of the firmament*, how much more wonderfully they grow; without stem or root or seed, budding out of the bosom of the storm, blossoming from the very blast; yet so beautiful that "Solomon in all his glory" was indeed "not arrayed like one of these," and so abundant as to fall in bouquets by the billion.

Longfellow called the snowfall "the poem of the air." Tyndall said the atoms of the flake arrange themselves "as if they moved to music," and unite to

make "that music concrete and visible." The snow-flakes seem not only tables of Law, but lyrics and "Psalms."

Prophets, too, the frost forms seem, foretelling the flowers and leaves that are coming. Aldrich tells it: —

> "These winter nights against my window-pane,
> Nature with busy pencil draws designs
> Of ferns and blossoms and fine sprays of pines,
> Oak leaves and acorns and fantastic vines,
> Which she will make when summer comes again."

The frost leaves seem to foretell the living ones, and the snow lilies to prophesy the flowers of spring.

They not only prophesy, but *protect* and help to produce the living flowers. Though seeming only cold, their work is just the opposite. Crystallization always gives out heat, the scientists say. Every flake and frost spangle has helped to warm the air. They not only warm the air in forming, but blanket the earth after falling. "He giveth snow like wool," says the Psalmist; and like a flannel robe it wraps and protects the earth. The melting drift in March shows the grass much greener under it than in the sunshine outside. Half-way to the pole, I have in early spring scraped away the snow and picked pansies that had blossomed beneath. We read how, by lake Superior,

the snowbound settlers used to dig through the deep drifts in the wood and find wild violets in bloom all winter. Dr. Kane, praising "the warm coverlet of the snow" in northern lands, said, "No eiderdown in the cradle of an infant is tucked in more kindly than this sleeping dress of winter about the feeble flower life." What seems a messenger of cold is really one of warmth; — a blessed blanket spun from the sea and woven by the winds, to be renewed every winter and removed every spring, without giving us the trouble to take care of it the rest of the year.

Even more does the snow tell of *warmth*, — for its frozen form is only the last and least part of its life history. The chief fact and force which it reveals is not the cold which has finally crystallized it, — but the heat which lifted it so high from tropic seas, and kept it aloft through all the weeks or months of its wanderings before it reached us. Its real word is warmth, — so that Tyndall said even glaciers are to be regarded as produced by heat rather than by cold. Born from southern seas, begotten of the sunshine, brought by the warm breezes, wandering for months through the heavens, blessing the nations on its way, now vanishing in vapor to soften the sun's rays, now shining in the clouds of the day and colors of the dawn, repeatedly melting and materializing

again, it leads its long, beneficent life. Freezing is only the final act by which it dies and drops to earth for burial.

And how cheery a message it brings about *death* and burial! For in dying it blossoms into stars and Easter lilies, and assumes a more beautiful form than ever before, as if rejoicing in the change that morbid mortals fear. Death clothes it in new glory, just as it does all our friends. As the dying leaves in autumn put on their richest colors, so this dying vapor is transformed into the most varied beauty, and seems to say that death is the last thing we need to be anxious about.

Nor does death end its work. Not only does it warm the air in dying, not only do its dead forms protect and bless the earth while they remain unburied; but their burial blesses it again. Their melting refreshes the fields, cleans the yards and streets, carries off the winter's accumulated filth that this may turn into fertility and fruit; — like many a thaw in our own lives, which seems to bring only loss, but is rather the removal of worn-out forms to purify and prepare us for a new season of growth.

Not even the snow itself is lost by its death and decomposition. Its substance is all saved and cannot perish. It vanishes, like all material things, but only

disappears to rise again and live in freer form. Revived by the unfailing sun, it is again raised to refresh the summer air, to sparkle in the morning dew, to float in clouds, to shine in sunsets, to fall in showers, to freshen the fields, and to reach a still higher life in leaf and flower. Whether soaring invisible in the blue sky, or sinking in earth or sea, it is still alive, and, like Shelley's "Cloud," it mocks the thought of death and sings its own survival: —

"I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.

"I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and upbuild it again."

So does even the winter storm seem a smile from heaven. It is a Revelation, bringing not only tables of Law, but Psalms of beauty, Prophecies of life, and whispers of a Love underlying all law and infolding all life.

UNITY THROUGH DIVERSITY

UNITY THROUGH DIVERSITY

NATURE seems ever to aim at diversity, and to show more of it with every advance. One nebula is supposed to have divided into all the worlds of the solar system. In our world, a few simple elements have formed countless compounds growing ever more complex. In the most complex, life came and multiplied the diversity far more. It divided into vegetable and animal, and each of these into species innumerable. In them, too, the higher the form, the more diverse its parts. A human body, with its intricate muscles, nerves, brain, is probably the most complicated organism on earth.

The human race has also separated into countless nations, with diverse languages, modes of life, and divisions of labor. Unlike other genera, it has carried its diversity even to individuals. The bees of a hive, the birds of a flock, look much alike; but men quite unlike, and the more so the more they advance. The members of a savage tribe show much resemblance; but in civilized society, even two brothers often seem to belong to different orders, and to be

further apart than a hawk and a dove. In short, this law of diversity, ever working from the nebula onward, has at length, in the human race, brought innumerable millions of forms, faces, even voices, — hardly any two alike.

It has brought no less variety in intellectual things. Two men, with very similar faces or forms, may, in their knowledge and thought, be no more alike than a bird and a fish. Each one also differs, not only from his neighbor, but from himself, often changing his opinion. Pope said that every year of a wise man is a censure of his past; the one with the shortest life lives long enough to laugh at half of it. For, the more men advance, the more their thoughts differ, and the greatest variety of opinion is among the learned. Scholars cannot agree who Buddha was, whether Homer was one man or twenty, when Zoroaster lived, or whether he ever lived at all. Historians cannot agree, — and the more learned they are the less certain they feel. The village school-girl in her essay settles some historic question very easily, but Motley said history cannot be written. Taine, after writing three volumes on the French Revolution, began the fourth with a confession that he had not yet been able to arrive at any fixed principles about it, except that "modern society is a vast and complicated thing."

Even about events in their midst, men differ. After hearing testimony for weeks, the jury cannot agree whether the prisoner is guilty or not. It is said that Sir Walter Raleigh, after trying in vain to learn the facts about a dog-fight in front of his house one morning, went back with much less assurance to his great work on "The History of the World." No more do students of social questions agree. Each school has some panacea which others think pernicious; while many think that all are, and that the true cure is to let alone. D. A. Wells said that, in a congressional inquiry concerning business depression, "the causes assigned by the various witnesses were comprised under no less than 180 heads," and that a British Commission showed "almost equal diversity of opinion." Often, too, the opinions are most contradictory. The protectionist and free-trader think each other fools, and hardly can politeness or piety keep them from saying so.

Even in matters of physical science, men disagree, and the professors dispute at every meeting. Not even in so vital a profession as the medical is there that unanimity which we would like in case of sickness. Doctors cannot agree whether the patient has cholera, or what to give him if he has, or how much of it. While one prescribes most generous doses, another

favors dilutions said to be about as infinitesimal as if he should drop a pill into the upper Mississippi and then treat the patient from the Gulf of Mexico. The patients themselves are little more agreed. While some people seem to think that disease is almost the chief end of man, a large body to-day, who claim to have reached the most advanced "Science," are teaching that there is no such thing as disease. After being disgraced with deafness for thirty years, I was the other day informed by a friend that she does not believe it is possible for any person to be deaf at all.

When men thus disagree about physical things, they of course will about spiritual. When two persons dispute about even the plain color of some form, we cannot expect agreement about formless things that no senses can perceive. As Dr. Holmes said: —

> "Why should we look one common faith to find,
> When one in every score is color-blind?
> If here on earth they know not red from green,
> Will they see better in the things not seen?"

Certainly these unseen things have been subjects for endless disagreements. Thoughts about the soul have ranged from the idea that it is a secretion of the brain, to the idea that it is a spark from deity; from the opinion that mind is only matter, to the opinion that matter is all mind, and to the further one that both

are illusions, with no reality at all. Thoughts about deity have ranged all the way from polytheism, with its millions of Gods and motley fancies about them, to atheism protesting against the idea of any God whatsoever.

Even the belief in one God has brought no more agreement about him, but has reached from the doctrine that he is fickle and moved by prayer, to the faith that he rules everywhere by law, making prayers an impertinence; — from the thought that he has human appetite and passion, to the thought that he has not even personality. Not even the monotheists worshiping the same Jehovah have agreed; but Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans have hated each other in his name. Each of these three divisions has had its subdivisions, too. Numerous sects have arisen even in Israel. Still more have arisen among Mohammedans. Palgrave told of an Arabian preacher whom he heard describing the seventy-two Moslem denominations and condemning seventy-one of them as destined to eternal fire.

Nor could even Christianity escape this tendency, though its founder had based it on brotherhood and unity. The divisions began very early, in the apostles' own time. Paul tells of several in the single church of Corinth, and he especially urges them to become

united and "all speak the same thing." But they could not. The law of Nature was against it, — and Christianity soon counted more sects than Christ left disciples. In the second century, Irenæus gave a long list of them, and they soon outnumbered his list. The Gnostic Christians alone, says Gibbon, "imperceptibly divided into more than fifty particular sects." The fourth century saw not only the great division between Athanasians and Arians, but many other important parties. Among the Arians alone eighteen sub-sects afterwards arose. In the fifth century divisions were so frequent that Hilary wrote, "Every year, nay, every month, we make new creeds," and "there are as many doctrines among Christians as there are individual inclinations." So active was the tendency to division even in the church of Christ.

The so-called "dark ages" of course checked this tendency, and for a time there was comparative agreement, especially in the Western church. But with the renaissance and new life of thought, the divisions again appeared. Not only was Protestantism divided from the Roman and Greek churches, but its freer thought made it the field for new diversities ever increasing. Protestants, though especially professing to base their belief upon an infallible book so clear that "the wayfaring man though a fool need not err,"

yet soon found that they differed more, with this book to unite them, than they had without it. Some exalted one text and some another; and all read, in each text, not so much what the author put there, as their own opinion. Hence they found the most diverse doctrines, — baptism by sprinkling, baptism by immersion, and no baptism at all; the keeping of Sunday, the keeping of Saturday, and the keeping of no day whatsoever; universal salvation and almost universal perdition. Biblical texts have been distorted about as badly as in Swift's satire, being made to prove any doctrine, whether theologic or scientific. A clergyman of my acquaintance, having been converted to the theory of evolution, wrote an elaborate book to show that it was all taught in the first chapter of the Bible. Professor Gunning told of one he knew who had discovered protoplasm in one of the Psalms. A work has been published taking great pains to show that the book of Job was a prophecy of the nineteenth century, and that its "leviathan" really meant a modern steamer, its "behemoth" a railway-train. Nor are such interpretations any more remarkable than Mr. Moody's familiar doctrine that the vicarious atonement was taught in every Scriptural allusion to blood, and that Christ's sacrifice to cover the sins of men was prefigured even in Eden by the animals slain to clothe

Adam and Eve. So easy is it for human thought to find any and all of its opinions in any book whatsoever.

Hence, notwithstanding their devotion to the Bible, Protestants increased their diversity of opinion and their divisions. Not even the established Church of England could prevent this, but has itself divided into High, Low, and Broad; while under its shadow dissenting sects have multiplied until a recent writer enumerated over a hundred and said that these are probably only about one-third of them. The same process has been active in our own country. A recent census showed not only so many different denominations, but the Baptists redivided into thirteen kinds, the Lutherans into sixteen kinds, the Methodists into seventeen, and even the little body of Mennonites into twelve. More significant, perhaps, the quiet and peaceful "Friends" had separated into four parties. Even the little band of the "United Brethren" had divided. Some churches seem to be moving toward the state of the storied one which, by repeated division, had been reduced to two members, each of whom was beginning to suspect the other of heresy. To an Irishman's remark that religion is "a very fine thing," another replied: "Yes, indeed; I get into more fights about religion than about almost anything

else in the world." So perhaps does the human race, — though generally of course, in a far quieter way than this strenuous Irishman would commend. At any rate, they are ever dividing on religious questions.

Nor would we condemn this in the least, as long as it is carried on peacefully. This diversity is the law of Nature, — to be fulfilled in religion as in the race, in faiths as in faces. The more we advance, the more it will be seen. In religion as in life, the lower orders may be classified in great genera and species, — Protestant or Catholic, — Episcopalian, or Baptist, or Sandemanian, — all true to their type; but the higher, like men, will diverge from the type, and, though keeping its name, will become individual, each member forming his own opinion. "Agree," says the church; —"differ," answers Nature; — and there is no doubt as to which command will conquer. Diversity will last and grow.

But diversity is only half the truth; and while tracing it we have also been seeing the other half, — *Unity*. For we have seen that these diversities are all connected by common origin, like the branches and twigs of a tree by its trunk. These hundreds of sects have sprung from a common Protestantism; Protest-

ants and Catholics from a common Christianity; Christianity itself from the Hebrew stock grafted with Greek thought; and both Hebrew and Greek thought have grown from the same human sentiments which have produced all other religions. All the countless present and past religious forms are but branches of the same great tree of spiritual life, — some higher, some lower, some flowering and fruiting, some barren and dead, but all one, at least in their origin. Religion is beginning to see that all its diversities are but superficial developments of a deeper unity. They are, at any rate, akin, and ought to forget their former quarrels, — as the wise old Greeks ordained that, in all their fraternal wars, the trophies must be made of perishable wood and never renewed.

But beyond this unity of origin is another, — that of the common truths still held by all. These Christian sects, with all their diversities, yet agree with each other much more than they differ; and agree with Hebrews, heretics, and heathen more than they differ from these. Most religions preach quite similar ideals, while all fall short of them in practice. Most religions have taught "to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with God," — which, the Hebrew prophet said, was all that the Lord required. Most have exhorted their adherents to keep unspotted from

the world, and to visit the fatherless and afflicted, — which was the Christian apostle's definition of "pure religion and undefiled." In these essentials they agree.

And how often the outward forms, in which they disagree, have a kindred meaning! Huxley said that if Marcus Antoninus could descend from his marble horse on the Capitoline hill and study the idolatry in Rome to-day, the chief difference he would discover between it and the old pagan idolatry would be in the poor quality of modern idols as works of art. But how much of the use of idols, both pagan and Christian, has been only symbolic of what Dyer terms "that worship of ideals miscalled idolatry." Most religious observances cover some truth, which is kept even by those who reject them. Howsoever good people baptize, or whether they baptize at all, they believe in the purity which baptism symbolizes. Whether their leading sacrament be the sacrifice of sheep at the altar, or the sacrifice of the mass, or the sacrifice of their own substance and selves in the duties of life, — it is only a different expression of the same truth. However diversely they may think of the redeeming power and divinity of Christ, they agree about the redeeming power and divinity of the love which is that name's best meaning. After talk-

ing with a clergyman, I said to him, "We agree well enough, — only you insist that our ideal shall be called 'Christ,' while I care not what it is called."

Even the diverse forms of prayer are not so different as they seem. Whether men pray against disease by turning Buddhist cylinders, by repeating Moslem sentences, by taking medicine, or by learning the laws of health, they are seeking the same thing; and however different the ways of seeking, each man is following the way he thinks best, — and to that extent they agree. Whether they pray for their daily bread by spoken petitions, or by plows and patent planters, they are making the same prayer to the God of the fields, each man according to his intelligence. Whether they seek more spiritual blessings by the way of appeal and aspiration, or by the way of will and work, it is all the same religion.

Often, too, the differences are only in names and words; — as in that Eastern parable of the four travelers contending fiercely as to what particular food they should buy, and finding at last that they had been quarreling about four different names for the same grape. Sometimes the names themselves prove to have been the same, — as in the discovery that the Christian "Heavenly Father" is the same term as the Roman "Jupiter." Language often teaches

this lesson of unity by showing the identity of the most unlike words. Our "bishop" and the French "*évêque*" are as unlike as two words can be, — not having a letter in common; yet they not only mean the same thing, but are the same word, both having come from the Greek "*episcopos.*" They hint that English Protestant and French Catholic, though often thinking that they have nothing in common, are yet one, and one with the Greek church; one even with the heathen Homer, who used the same word so many centuries before Christianity, and even used it of harmony, — "*episcopoi harmoniaon.*" The word has still larger suggestions, for its root, "skop," is also that of our "skeptic." Bishop and skeptic are linked in language, and are learning that they are linked in religion also, both laboring in the same sacred episcopate. Religion needs the seers quite as much as the overseers, and skeptics have often called bishops back to the humane principles of Christ. It was once said that Bradlaugh, the atheist, ought to be made Archbishop of Canterbury, since he was truer to Jesus' fundamental teachings of peace and forgiveness than was the occupant of that sacred office. Nor can such atheists be counted as irreligious even; for they have usually not denied Deity, but only narrow doctrines about him, thereby asserting greater.

Beyond this unity of origin, and of common truth beneath the diversities, is a third, which the diversities have brought. They have themselves been cultivating toleration, and bringing "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." What indeed has done more than these diversities to bring peace and charity among men? When a community all believe alike, they cannot be charitable, but will persecute each new thought, and the thinker with it, as the medieval church did. But as they become divided in their opinions, they are forced to endure and forgive each other, as modern sects have been learning to do. We want no more uniformity of belief. If even the most liberal sect should become universal, it might found an inquisition for heresy and hold an occasional *auto-da-fe*. As Voltaire said: "If there were but one religion in England, its tyranny would be terrible; if there were but two, they would cut each other's throats; but there are thirty, and they live in peace." We may add that now, when there are 230, they are still more peaceful. Men whose differences would once have made them burn each other are joined in new brotherhood, and bettered in many ways. John Fiske, declaring that "uniformity of belief should be dreaded as tending toward Chinese narrowness and stagnation," adds that England's "imperial

position in the modern world" is largely due to the fact that, "on that hospitable soil, all types of character, all varieties of temper, all shades of belief have flourished side by side and have interacted upon one another." We want all these diversities; for out of them is coming a larger thought, a broader charity and brotherhood, the best religious unity.

So we reach the full statement of the law of growth. It is not merely "from unity to diversity," but "*from unity through diversity to a truer Unity.*" This is illustrated everywhere. The uniform nebula separated into diverse worlds, only to become more closely united in a system where each satellite moves in harmony and sympathy with every other; where a storm in the sun quickly sways all the magnetic needles on earth. So in animal life, the multiplying organs have brought far closer unity. In contrast with those lower creatures of uniform structure which can be cut into two pieces without perceiving that anything has happened, the complex human body is so united that, as Paul said, "if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it," and a mere scratch in the hand may bring convulsions and death.

So in society, which has been so often compared to an animal body. The growing divisions of labor and diversities of life have been uniting mankind.

In contrast to a molluscous society of savages digging their roots and catching their lizards independent of the world and of each other, we depend for breakfast on Dakota farmers and Minnesota millers and Texas ranchmen and California fruit-raisers and Javanese planters, and on many miners and merchants and railroads. We cannot even get the watch to tell us when to eat until a score of nations and a hundred trades have combined to make it. All lives have become so interlinked that Carlyle said the Winnipeg Indian cannot quarrel with his squaw without raising the price of pelts and making the whole world suffer.

To the human body, with its "many members," Paul compared religion also; and he so liked the comparison that he repeated it two or three times, and once drew it out through most of a chapter. He did not want men pressed into the same mold, like bricks, to be baked and built into a rigid church, but likened religion to the most living and free and complex body known. Naturally, the Messiah was figured as the head of that body; — and so he may be, if we mean thereby, not a mere person about whom opinions differ, but those principles of righteousness and love which, to the best thinkers in Israel and Christendom alike, the Messiah means. More and more are Chris-

tians becoming such a body, and more and more they will unite with other religions in a grander body. Its diverse members will all work and worship in their own ways, but will have a common head in the Messianic rule of righteousness, and a common heart sending its warm circulation of sympathy through all mankind. Should such a body ever be realized, there would come a religious life compared with which the present quarrels of sects would seem like savagery, and mere uniformity of belief like a mollusc beside a man, or a nebula beside the varied life of a May morning.

Welcome, then, to all movements for union. The sacred name "pontiff," applied alike to the old Roman and Jewish and Christian priesthoods, meant literally a "bridge-builder"; and a movement to bridge the chasms across which rival religions have long cursed each other, and to join them in mutual intercourse and charity, will make the best pontificate the world has known.

Not that we would wish the dividing lines obliterated and all religions merged in one. We want no universal church based on compromise or on contradictions, — like that accommodating academy which advertised that it would teach pupils to believe the earth round or flat, as the parents might prefer. Rather, let each religion and sect teach its own belief and worship in

its own way. But let each remember how much it has in common with all the rest, and in this common work let all be willing to unite. By such union none will lose his religion, but all will find more.

As in a great cathedral men come out from the little side chapels and shrines, to meet before the high altar and beneath the vaster vault ; — so, in leaving our sectarian services to join with others in the common work for justice and humanity, we find that we have only come beneath a loftier religious roof, to unite in a larger worship. Even if we do not so unite, our worships do, — as in that old English abbey where the men and women sang their hymns apart, hidden from each other by a dividing wall, but with their voices mingling above it in harmony. The dividing walls still stand in the religious world, and probably will for many centuries to come. But above the walls, the varied strains from womanly devotion and manly daring, from all honest liturgies and labors, mingle in one music to the Eternal Power by whom all have been produced and all are accepted.

NEW LEAVES OF SCRIPTURE

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THE foliage has too long been used for funereal lessons. Homer's Glaucus sang how human generations come and go like "the race of leaves" which "the wind sheds upon the ground." Aristophanes' "Birds" mocked men with the same comparison. The great Hebrew prophet said, "We all do fade as a leaf"; and the figure often recurs in the Bible. Dante made the falling leaves illustrate the still direr fate of dead souls dropping one by one into Charon's boat, to be borne over Acheron's "brown wave" to the infernal pit and punishment. Modern poets have continued the dirge; — from Bryant, moaning that "the melancholy days have come, the saddest of the year," to William Watson, singing their glories, but still hearing in them the "voice of everything that perishes," the "metaphor of everything that dies." Especially have preachers made the falling leaves a favorite text, and drawn from them sermons drearier than a November storm.

But this is hardly fair to either us or the leaves. They may fade and fall; but to make that their lesson

is to distort the truth. For the chief fact about the foliage is not that it fades for a few days, but that it flourishes for a whole season. The chief fact about each leaf is not that it falls for a moment, but that for month after month it refuses to fall, though all the winds are trying to tear it from the tree. Through long weeks of drought, through storms that wreck ships and unroof houses, the leaf works on, with no fears of a fall.

Even when it falls, it may not have faded. The October landscape seems keeping festival rather than funeral, and its foliage is often brighter than summer blossoms. Thoreau called the scarlet oaks, in autumn, "forest-flowers," and said, "these are my China-asters," or "great oak roses," to be admired miles away, and richer than "all that spring or summer can do." Often, we may add, this autumn flower is not merely a tree, but an acre of them, showing a whole forest hollow turned into one blossom, whose stamens are golden poplars or hickories, and whose petals are whole hillsides of crimsoned oaks and sumachs, spotted with blazing bushes and streaked with vines of more colors than any corolla can show. The autumn landscape seems to say that if "we all do fade as a leaf," we need not lament.

Even if the falling leaves call for a funeral discourse,

it should be a healthy one, telling what they have done. They deserve our eulogy for services innumerable. Even literature owes them much, and the debt is recorded in our very language. The leaves of plants named the "leaves" of books. The great "folios" took that title from the foliage; and many kindred terms come from what the leaves have made. The word "paper" comes from the old papyrus plant. Even "Bible" is but the Greek name of that plant. The term "codex," given to precious old manuscripts, originally meant a tree-trunk or stem. Even the word "book" is derived from the beech, not only in our own, but in several Teutonic tongues. So the Latin word "*liber*," which has named books in so many languages, — from our "library," to the Italian "*libro*" and "*libretto*," and the French "*livre*," — originally meant, rather, the bark of a tree. Such words are of course no mere fancy, but tell of the real use of beech and bark and leaves in writing. The ancient Sibyl wrote her revelations on leaves to be scattered by the wind; and, since then, many Christian Bibles have been written on them. So is Scripture indebted to the leaves.

But even without such writing, do they not bring a revelation? Theocritus sang the "sweet whispering" of the pine; and, long before him, a Greek poet told

how "the plane-tree whispers to the elm in spring." Such whisperings were also thought divine. Pliny said the trees were the earliest dwellings of the gods. Even the American Mount Holyoke tells of the old belief in holy oaks. The Greeks not only saw each tree inhabited by a dryad, but thought the great Zeus spoke his truest oracles through the sacred oak at Dodona and the rustling of its leaves. Many a poet still hears in them a revelation.

Do they not bring even a written one, — a real Scripture? They are a tissue finer than any paper or parchment, and inscribed for all who will inspect them. Pick from under your feet the finest leaf of moss, — so small as to be covered by a grain of wheat, so thin as to be almost transparent. Put it under a lens, and see its hundreds of cells, as beautiful and as varied as the letters of any alphabet. Increase the power of the glass, and see a single cell dotted with its bright array of separate green granules, — a letter not only illuminated, but alive and full of meaning to one who can read it. Such cells, piled by the million in a myriad shapes, compose all our leaves, from the grass-blade up to the wonders of a tropical forest. They are also combined to provide the leaf with all sorts of aids, even with countless little "stomata" or mouths, curiously two-lipped like a man's, and opening and

shutting in the changing weather, as if they had something to say. Doubtless they do whisper truer revelations than the Greeks heard in the rustling oak at Dodona. Doubtless oracles diviner than the Sibyl's are still written on all the leaves scattered by the autumn winds. For these, too, seem divine, — published by no man, but only by the Creator, in annual editions, reissued every spring from originals which are older than Adam and which make all human history seem in comparison but a morning paper. We may not yet be able to read them as well as Edwin Markam's poet who

> "... knows the gospel of the trees,
> And whispered message of the seas;
> Finds in some dead leaf dried and curled
> The deeper meaning of the world";

but doubtless each leaf has as deep a meaning as even Tennyson's "flower in the crannied wall," and the most prosaic man may read a little of it.

What is the leaf? Chiefly and briefly, it is an organ to gain more light and air for the creation of food. That creation is seen nowhere else than in green plants. Animals only appropriate and transform food already made. A large class of plants do the same, — all the fungi and many a pale parasite. But the green plants, and only they, create food from inorganic

matter, — thus providing not only for themselves, but for all other life.

To do this, they must have light as a first essential. We see them everywhere reaching after it, — from the house-plant turning to the window, and the potato-sprout in the dark cellar stretching toward the chink in the wall, to the great forest-trees pushing outward or upward to the light and thus shaped by it, and the little vine in their shade climbing to the forest top to spread its branches in the sun.

The lowest division of green plants, the algæ, have no special organs for receiving light, but get it through their general surface, — though often becoming flat and leaflike to increase that surface. But the higher plants learn to increase it more by leaves, which they spread to catch more light and air, as a boat spreads sails to catch more breeze. These leaves begin very small in the mosses, but become large in ferns,— and thenceforth, through most of the higher orders, are the chief means of obtaining light. They generally even face it, except in climates and cases where the heat would be hurtful. Sometimes they even turn the whole plant-top with them, thus causing the names "sun-flower" and "heliotrope" and the legend of Clytie in love with the sun.

But what is done by this light which the leaves so

seek? First, it colors those minute green granules, such as we saw scattered in the microscopic cell of the moss-leaf. It does this in the cells, not only of leaves, but of all green surfaces. All vegetable green is made only by the light; and, when made, it dies out in the dark, as in bleaching celery or buried grass. It is all made in the same way, — by that invisible point, repeated by the million, until it paints the leaf, lawn, prairie, and mountain-side, in varied tints that no art can imitate. Man may indeed make a little of something which he calls green, out of arsenic or other poison, often bringing more anxiety than beauty; — but the light, by the mere repetition of that invisible point, makes it so abundantly as to clothe the continent in beauty, — and not merely harmless, but feeding the cattle on a thousand hills.

That point feeds all other life, too; for it is no sooner made than it begins a still more wonderful work. It is a busy little factory, not only painted, but driven, by the light. It is even the most important factory in the world, — making that starch which is the foundation of all food and growth. Men may claim to make this in their mills, but they only collect what the leaves have made. The original and only real starch-factory is that microscopic green point.

Still more curious, it not only makes this rich product, but makes it from two poor ones that are often pernicious. One of these is mere worthless water, pumped from the wet ground. The other is a worse than worthless gas, poisonous to breathe, but poured out from animal lungs and all fires, and absorbed by leaves from the air. This gas and water are both hard to decompose by our chemistry; but that little green granule does it easily all the day. Still more wonderful, — having decomposed them, it creates from their elements that vital product which no human chemistry can. And this starch not only feeds all plants, and is stored up in their fruits and stems and roots for animals, but is the basis of various other important products, especially of the cellulose and woody fiber that builds the forests.

With this process is connected the no less vital one of refreshing the air. Man's factories poison the air, but these purify it. They not only take away and decompose that deadly gas, but give back the very element for breath. The New Testament author, telling of the "tree of life" in the New Jerusalem, said its "leaves are for the healing of the nations"; and the Old Testament text, from which he took the thought, said more clearly that they are "for medicine." So are our leaves, the druggists say. But

they are better than medicinal, — not merely healing disease, but preventing it by purifying the air.

Nor are they doing this now only, but were for ages before man. That poisonous gas was then too abundant to allow man to live at all. But, through long geologic ages, the leaves slowly removed and decomposed it, sent back its oxygen into the air for breath, and stored up its carbon to keep, in our rich beds of coal.

So much do we owe to that microscopic green point. Ages before man it was at work for him, providing both air and coal. It still works on, turning his burned coal into forests again, and his befouled air into food. And as fast as he consumes the forests and food, it again changes their gases into growing trees and grains and fruits of a thousand kinds, — still purifying the air in the process, and turning its poison into both bread of life and breath of life. Surely these are leaves, not only of Scripture, but of a Gospel.

Or if Scripture must tell of marvels and *miracles*, — do not these leaves? To the true thought, the marvel is no less because following laws or because familiar. Emerson said, "the foolish man wonders at the unusual, but the wise man at the usual"; and in every leaf and grass-blade, wisdom sees wonders and miracles enough. Their mystery no science has explained, and their

marvel should seem all the greater because renewed every summer. Was Aaron's budding rod, in the Biblical story, any greater miracle than the rods budding by the million in the spring forest and from the frozen ground? Were the withered leaves of the blasted fig-tree any better miracle than the leaves of every field, unwithered by the summer drought, and ever working to bless the world? Was even the multiplication of the loaves, or that "barrel of meal" so miraculously increased for the widow, any more miraculous than these green granules still multiplying loaves for all the world, still making meal in every leaf of summer?

Or if Scripture must teach *lessons*, do not the leaves? Their lesson of the need of *light* is just what all good teachers and preachers proclaim; and the apostle bids men abide and "walk in the light." Light always stands for truth, and darkness for error and ignorance. Lack of light dwarfs and deforms minds as well as plants. Darkness bleaches souls as well as celery; and though it may give them a tempting tenderness, it keeps them weak. It even makes them unjust. Many of the worst wrongs in history have been due to ignorance alone, and would have been impossible in the light of a larger knowledge and thought. Our lower life may fatten in the dark, like

fungi; but a broad charity and justice can no more grow without light than can the leaves. Truth is the best thing in the world.

Nor need we dilute and adapt truth to weak souls so timidly as is often done. Some of course want less light than others, just as some plants do. But, like plants, they keep their proper place, and are in no more danger of following too strong a light than forest ferns are of spreading into the sunny fields. Feeble souls, that might be harmed by philosophy, never feed on it. They even close, to exclude too strong a light, — just as the animal eye does by contracting its iris. Souls have their iris of prejudice, which is self-adjusting and contracts in a moment against any excessive illumination.

This self-adjusting power is taught in the leaves, too. In a perilous air, their stomata shut, like animal eyes and human minds. The whole leaf sometimes folds and shuts, — as that of the clover against the evening chill, or that of the sensitive-plant against a shock. In climates and species where the sun's heat would be too severe, leaves often take a vertical position so as to escape the noon-day rays; sometimes even point north and south so as to escape them better. In many ways they show the providence in Nature and tell us to trust her.

Leaves teach also the right *philosophy* of life. They rebuke that false radicalism which seeks only to outroot, and teach the truer radicalism which keeps inrooted and uses roots rather than kills them. Society, like a tree, has grown from the ground of the past. Beneath us lies a deposit of old opinions, traditions, literatures, laws, customs, — the accumulated soil of the centuries. In this, society is rooted; from this it draws needful subsistence and much of the "water of life." For us to cut loose from the past, in order to advance, is much as if the gardener should pull up his plant to make it grow faster.

But, on the other hand, leaves teach us to use the past with the greatest freedom. They do not take the sand and gravel of the soil, but only the fluid found there; and most of this is mere water freshly fallen from the air. No more are we to absorb from the past its petrified opinions or fossilized legends, but only what is soluble and nutritious, what dissolves and rises in our own thought to feed us. Even what we do thus take is of no value until brought out into the light and transformed into life, as in the leaves. Though so dependent on the soil, their work is in the wind, and their food is drawn almost entirely from fallen showers and floating vapors. The great tree is not a child of earth, but chiefly of air, light, heaven.

So is man; and his work is not in the dark soil of the past, but in the light and air of to-day.

Our best work is indeed just like that of the leaves: — to remove from the social atmosphere the poison ever accumulating from the breath and fires of human passions; to decompose it and old opinions in the light of thought and warmth of kindly feelings; to recombine the elements in new growth. In short, to let the heavenly rays of reason and love work in us to revitalize the air and build up the "tree of life."

The leaves teach also the best way of doing this, — patiently, quietly, by the slow and *silent processes* of education. Nothing teaches better than they the truth of greatest work by gentlest methods. Think how, without sound of pump or sight of piston, there is every day lifted through them, higher than the house-tops, a flood compared with which that sent by the noisy water-works of all our cities is as nothing. Think how gentle is the light that paints the continent and drives those little factories all the summer without a sound. Yet they weave more wondrous tissue than any loom, to carpet the prairies and drape the forests; they build trees taller and more lasting than human temples; they fill the valleys and mountains with timber for homes and human arts; they have even

stored up the deep beds of coal to drive factories, draw trains, and push ships across the seas.

The best human work is done as quietly. Even in mechanics, the gentlest methods are most powerful. Silent heat lengthens the iron bar better than any hammers. Slow hydraulic pressure does work quite impossible by quicker methods. The immense iron tubes of the Britannia bridge, — each longer than the tallest tree and large enough to let locomotives through, — were yet lifted to their places, higher than ship-masts, by the pressure of a column of water no thicker than a finger. When in their places, it was found that the silent sunshine arched and lifted those ponderous spans, every day, more than the heaviest railway-trains lowered them; just as the same sunshine swells the rocks and bends Bunker Hill monument. The gentlest methods are the strongest. The very builder of that bridge, so familiar with mighty forces, when asked what is the mightiest one on earth, replied, "A woman's eye."

Not only in the physical, but in the social and moral field, the strongest forces are of the same kind, — working silently, like sunshine, to lift and build rather than break. Loud and violent ways do for destruction, — for blowing up cities, sinking ships, killing men, and bringing disorder; but for building

cities or civilization, the opposite ways are needed. The world does indeed still glorify the brutal methods of its savage days, spending far more for wars than for schools; and even professing Christians, while teaching that it was a "very God" who ordered them to love their enemies, often teach that it is better to butcher them in battles or in bombardments. But we shall some time learn that a wiser and more Christian lesson is this of gentle methods, taught by the light and the leaves.

Even something like Christian *brotherhood* seems taught by them. With all their eagerness for the light, the leaves of the same plant are curiously careful not to deprive each other of it, — being so arranged and shaped, often so narrowed or divided, as to shade others as little as possible. Even rival plants are brotherly. Their competitions are in the method of business rather than of battle, and much more humane than many in human history. William Watson sings the coming day when warring nations,

> ". . . wise from all the foolish past,
> Shall peradventure hail at last
> The advent of that morn divine
> When nations shall as forests grow,
> Wherein the oak hates not the pine,
> Nor beeches wish the cedar woe, —

But all in their unlikeness blend,
Confederate to one golden end."

Still more "confederate" they seem when trees of many kinds not only interlace their arms in sisterly way and help each other against the wind, but aid the weaker plants. Horace sang the elm's friendliness to vines, —"*amicta vitibus ulmo.*" Many trees not only show this, but hospitably welcome the poor mosses and liverworts at their base, and entertain the lichens on their bark. The lichens themselves are now found to be a brotherly combination of algæ and fungi. There are many such cases of "plant partnerships." There are indeed many parasitic and thievish plants, robbing the stores of others; and some have most cunning devices for capturing and killing insects that prey upon them. But these are rare exceptions, and most plants are all innocence. In Stevenson's fable, the visitor from another planet, after inspecting our various forms of life, concluded that trees, with their calm and gentle ways, are the noblest people on earth. When we think, further, how plants provide for all other life, they seem to be an embodied beneficence and to teach quite as good lessons as any church.

They even teach that lesson of *unity* which churches have been rather slow to learn. Some religious sects have been prone to think themselves quite distinct

from the rest of the human race, — an exceptional species of plant, kept apart in the conservatory of a special providence, — while all others form but a vile wilderness, Satan's swamp, perhaps growing only to feed the infernal fires. Such beliefs are quite corrected by botany, which shows the kinship and unity of all vegetable life. The leaves, through all their myriad sizes and shapes, are formed of the same cells, and are working in the same way. The varied flowers, with all their parts, are but "metamorphosed leaves." All the vegetable species, from mosses up to majestic pines, — from the sacred cedars of Lebanon and the olive trees about Jerusalem, down to the microscopic desmid in the ditch, — have yet grown from the same elements, just as all the varied religions from the same sentiments. All are subject to the same laws, all fostered by the same light, all filled with the same life. Better than any creed in the world do plants proclaim the truth of unity and brotherhood.

Do they not proclaim even a truer *theology*, — a better *God?* Science may indeed ignore this name; but that is largely a matter of language. The poet, describing the beauties of October, adds :

> "Some of us call it Autumn,
> And others call it God."

How much better a God is taught by the plants than by much of the preaching! Lowell lamented that the old Greeks, with their "beautiful beliefs,"—such as that "which gave a Hamadryad to each tree,"—had been displaced by men teaching Satan's "horn and hoof" and "the witch's broomstick," and

> "Fearing their God as if he were a wolf
> That snuffed round every home and was not seen."

But better than Greek Hamadryads, or than nymphs of any faith, is the Power seen in every tree and making the whole vegetable world so beneficent that Emerson defined even weeds as plants whose virtues had not yet been found out. The forests correct our faith. A far better God is proclaimed in the summer foliage than in the pious old folios.

Think of the leaves that men have published, representing their God as a monster who saves a few favorite children and sends all the rest to eternal torture. Contrast such leaves with these published by the Creator himself every spring, to bring blessings impartially to all creatures. Seeing how they work all summer to sweeten the air and fill the earth with food, to make "grass to grow for cattle and herb for the service of man," and to build the trees where the

"fowls of heaven have their habitation" and "sing among the branches," we feel that they are as good "leaves of Scripture" as any ever written. "Love-letters from God," a poet called them; and when, one autumn day, a falling leaf dropped in my letter-box at the door, I fancied that, if I could read it fully, it would be a richer epistle than postman ever brought or apostle ever penned.

Nor does the death of the leaves darken their lesson. A noted botanist calls their fall, not a breaking-off, but a "process of growing off." Their season's work is done, and Nature brings a growth that gently separates them from the tree. If they "fade," it is often into new glory, as we have seen; — much as men do in the esteem of their friends, when they die. When they fall, it is to go dancing through the streets and waltzing with the wind, as if rejoicing in their liberty, like children released from school. Even when trodden under foot, it is only to restore their mineral matter to earth for growth again, while their real life lives on and has not fallen at all. It is only their dried skeletons that fall. The substances which made their life have all been withdrawn before they drop, and are securely stored away in stems and roots and seeds, to survive the winter and rise again

in the buds and fruits of another year. They too proclaim, "O grave, where is thy victory?"

Thus do the summer leaves reveal, more sweetly than the whisperings of Aristophanes' plane-tree or Theocritus' pine, lessons of life and love; and even in their fall and decay are still "leaves of Scripture."

"THE COSMIC ROOTS OF LOVE"

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ONE of the last papers published by John Fiske is his Phi Beta Kappa address on the ethical aim in Nature. It is entitled, "The Cosmic Roots of Love and Self-sacrifice." It seems, however, to leave these roots quite short of cosmic. It locates them in the prolonged infancy and close motherhood of mammalian life. But, surely, they reach lower than that. The hen is no mammal, and her infants walk the first hour; yet she shows so much "love and self-sacrifice" that even Jesus took her to illustrate his own. Poets back to Euripides have praised the devotion of birds for their young. Nor is it limited to their young, but we read of them dying of grief for mates; and Darwin tells of pelicans and crows, old and blind, but faithfully fed and cared for by their companions. Here seems a foregleam of the benevolence that builds our hospitals for the aged and infirm. Even the parental devotion in every bird's nest shows the growth of love already begun.

Below birds it has begun, and Romanes says "parental affection" is found among reptiles and fish.

Back in the old Jurassic swamps and Devonian seas there was some virtue. Even below vertebrates, in the insect world, there was something like it. Bees sacrifice themselves for their community, dying for their hive as patriots for their country, or attacking another as devotedly as Christian armies sack Chinese towns.

So the ant is praised by even the Bible as an example for men; and not only "sluggards," but most citizens, might "consider her ways" and be wiser. Professor Everett said, "In the ant-hill there is a civilization very like our own,"—and in some respects it seems better. An ant community may contain more members than there are men in Louisville; yet Lubbock says they never quarrel, but are all "laboring with the utmost harmony for the common good." They may have no moral sense, but they do their duty better than many a man who boasts of his. They may have little sympathy; but Lubbock says there are "good Samaritans among them," helping wounded sisters with something like "humane feelings," while all show extreme devotion to the larval infants that are not even their own. When we think further of their vast numbers,—more in a square mile than there are men in America,—all and ever busy in work which Spencer calls "almost wholly altruistic," we see that "the

roots of self-sacrifice" not only reach far below mammals, but pervade a vast world of social insects.

Lower still this social and altruistic principle may be traced down the animal scale, to the very sponge, which is a genuine society, made of many individuals united in service of each other and their community. Such societies may have no ethical or even conscious life, but they already proclaim the ethical principle of mutual service for the common good. They show the "roots" we are searching, — only roots, indeed, and with no hint of the rich fruit to come, but already started in life so low that it used to be thought vegetable.

Even in vegetable life they have started. The plant, too, is a sort of society, with varied members united in mutual service and sacrifice. Leaves give their lives for the tree, like good families for the State. The flower is a family, botanists say, with even the wedding of sexes and parental sacrifice for the offspring. The flower may not be conscious of its virtues, — and we often wish that some human families were, in this respect, more like it. But in it the ethical principle is on the way to consciousness.

It is on the way far below the flower. Down among the molds and microscopic algæ, we see two cells of different sexes giving themselves to each other and

their offspring with something of the same principle and process seen in the bird's nest and the human home. To such unions even so unfanciful a scientist as Haeckel ascribed the origin of love, tracing its source back to what he called "the elective affinity of two differing cells." Even so orthodox a writer as Drummond, using the same term as Mr. Fiske and somewhat before him, spoke of their "self-sacrifice," and said, "Love is not a late arrival," but "its roots began to grow with the first cell that budded on this earth." So do they reach to the lowest foundations of life.

Do they not reach even back of life to the inorganic world? The same principle of union and co-operation is found in everything there. In every rock and crystal of the mountains and drop of the sea, molecules have united in systems; and each molecule in turn is called a marriage of atoms. Not only Haeckel's "affinity of differing cells," but all chemical affinity, is at least prophetic of that which unites us in societies and families.

And is not the earth itself member of a society which is something like a family? Even the most prosaic astronomers call the planets a "sisterhood," which have all sprung from the solar mass as a common mother, and have in turn given birth to a score of

satellite daughters. All these worlds form a family; and, though they have separated so far, they are still held together by a sort of family affection, which is none the less real because named gravitation. Under its rule, each daughter world not only bends her onward impulse into a filial orbit around her mother, but turns from her course to greet every passing sister planet. Even the wayward comet sons come back from their wide wanderings to be welcomed and warmed again at the family hearth.

A foolish fancy, of course, but yet a fact! The very gravitation which unites the solar system is another of these mutual attractions which we have been tracing. Nor is it limited to our own, but is seen in many a system of double or triple stars moving about each other or around their common center. It not only moves worlds, but gathered and globed them to begin with, astronomers say; and in the spiral streaks of many a nebula we seem to see the movement starting, and matter slowly drawing together to shine in new suns and systems.

So does this attraction and union, in one phase or another, pervade the universe, — a cosmic principle. It is ever attended by the opposite one of separation, but is the more creative of the two. It blesses everywhere, from the gathering and warming of worlds in

systems, up to the gathering of animals in societies and of men in families warm with sympathy and love. In it, rather than in the mere prolongation of infancy, would I see the "cosmic roots of love,"— reaching back of mammals and of all motherhood, back of Haeckel's cells and oldest suns, running through the wreaths of the nebula, threading every atom, thrilling through the infinite ether, already alive in that mysterious gravitation which, like the spirit of God in the Biblical story, first moved on the face of the abyss, and said, "Let there be light."

I fancy there may yet come some poet-philosopher who will commence his ethical study, not with Scripture, not even with human souls or lowest cells or solar systems, — but back of them all, with the first movement of matter toward union. He will read in the lines of the gathering nebula a heavenly scripture already revealing the law of love, and in every star a text in prophecy of Christ. He will simply trace this cosmic principle of *union* through its advancing phases in creation.

It is ever opposed by repulsion, separation, strife, but is ever harmonizing the strife. Just as, in gravitation, it gathered diffuse matter into globes, and the separating globes in systems; so on our globe, in the finer chemical affinities, it combined atoms in molecules,

and these in compounds ever more complex. In condensation and cohesion it brought liquids and solids. In crystallization it built the myriad shapes of beauty in the rocks. In more marvelous vital organization it combined compounds in cells, and these again in the countless forms of life.

Among these individual forms came that cruel competition and strife which pessimists make so much of, and which has indeed given to Nature a tragic aspect. But in melioration of the strife our principle took a *social* form, uniting individuals in societies of mutual help, which pessimists forget. This social principle has everywhere prevailed, — not only in the vast insect world, but in animals of all sorts, from buffaloes on the plain to beavers in the pond, — bringing swarms, schools, flocks, herds, and myriads of minor co-operations, like those told in Kropotkin's book. He holds that, even "as a factor of evolution," the fraternal principle of mutual aid has been much more important than "mutual strife," and has thus largely redeemed Nature from the common charge of cruelty.

Most of these animal societies seem to be merely utilitarian, with little real sympathy. But this comes with the higher union of the *family*. The family begins low, as we saw, and its affection is long feeble. Even conjugal love is at first fleeting. Among

some insects the bride does not hesitate to slay her husband when the nuptials are over. Maternal love may be no stronger. Even among vertebrates, eggs and infants are widely left to perish, — as they may well be when there are so many of them. When the progeny of a single herring would soon fill the ocean solid, maternal care would hardly be a virtue. But, with higher organization and fewer offspring, that care increases. In birds it becomes proverbial; and the mother, if not loving her neighbor as herself, at least loves her infants as herself, and so seems almost to have begun to be a Christian. Her love is very limited, however, and lasts only a month, — after which her moral law is suspended till another season.

But the mammalian structure carries that union further, — unites mother and infant much more closely and longer. At length, the delicate human body and brain so prolong the helpless infancy that the union has to last for years, and thus becomes a habit to last through life. The family becomes permanent, and its affection fixed. Its permanence also extends the union, — holds together parents and children and children's children in a widening circle of kinsmen. So we reach one of those clans, gens, or little tribes, in which society seems everywhere to have started. This cosmic principle of union, working from atoms

upward, has at length unfolded its higher meaning, and brought, not merely a utilitarian society of animals, but a human brotherhood inspired with sympathy.

This little *tribe* often shows that brotherhood perfect between its own members, however cruel to others. Boyle says that even the Dyaks, so famed for ferocity and murders, were yet, among themselves, "humane to a degree that might well shame" us. Some refuse to believe this of savages, especially of heathen. But why? Why think affection impossible among barbarians, when it abounds among birds? Why think self-sacrifice impossible among the heathen, when it is the law of every ant-hill? Why think pagans cannot keep the ten commandments, when the mere moon keeps every one of them, except that of the Sabbath? Kindness comes by nature, and even by necessity, for the tribe cannot hold together without it. It is still confined to the tribe, however, and perhaps is fiercely hostile to outsiders, — only the narrow harmony of a hornet's nest.

But our principle works on through history to extend the harmony. It unites little tribes in larger, and these in larger still, until a *nation* is formed. The nation keeps new peace within, and cultivates the juster ideals seen in ancient literature. Plato wrote, "May I, being of sound mind, do to others as

I would that they should do to me"; and already the sentiment was familiar from Athens to the end of Asia. This brotherhood, however, was only national. Even the comparatively humane Greeks did not try to be so to foreigners; and Plato, in giving the Golden Rule, did not mean for a moment that it was to be practised toward barbarians.

But the principle worked on, joining nations in larger union and extending the *humanity*. In the West this extension came through the Roman rule, uniting peoples from the British Isles to the Euphrates, and giving to ethics a cosmopolitan tone. In the century before Christ, Cicero and the Stoics preached universal brotherhood; Varro, in giving the Golden Rule, no longer left it local, but said it should embrace all the nations of mankind. In the time of the apostles the pagan Lucan predicted that the world would soon cast aside its weapons, and all nations learn to love. In practice, too, there was for two centuries, in the "*Pax Romana*," such a world-peace as earth never saw before or since. The Romans, however, were not the people to perfect that union. They had brought it through vast wars, and still kept class divisions and cruel wrongs that made the Stoics' precepts seem a mockery.

But now came from the nation of *Israel* a move-

ment to further that brotherhood, and, still more important, to identify it at last with religion. That nation itself well illustrates this law of ethical growth. It had started, according to the Biblical story, in one of those primitive families, with not even the domestic virtues yet fully established. Jacob robs his twin brother and deceives his dying father, and is incited to this by his mother; and his sons, the fathers of the tribes of Israel, seek to slay their best brother and finally sell him into slavery. These tribes, too, though fairly united within, had fought each other, and had well nigh exterminated Benjamin. But they had at length united in a nation, reached a larger justice, and learned the Decalogue. The justice, however, had been only national. Even eminent saints in Israel denied the Decalogue in dealing with other peoples. They burned town after town even in the name of the Lord, and "utterly destroyed all that breathed." Of course, we need not believe it was really so bad as this; and the Bible often shows these annihilated towns and tribes reappearing right afterward, active as ever. But the stories show no less the low ideals of the authors, in both morals and religion. These ideals, however, continued to rise, until the great prophets of the eighth century B.C. not only plead passionately for brotherhood within the nation, but even predicted the union of nations,

when swords should be beaten into ploughshares and the world should learn war no more.

But, — most important of all, — this brotherhood was made the essence of *religion.* It was taught that the Lord cared little for their ceremonies and prayers, wanted no more blood of animals or men, but only that they should "do justly and love mercy." This teaching, though of course unheeded, continued among the best Jews. Rabbi Hillel, in giving the Golden Rule, called it "the substance of the law"; and Jesus called it both "the law and the prophets." Jesus' Beatitudes are all only ethical and do not hint that religion is anything more. They give the highest blessings to those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness," to "the meek" and "the merciful"; and, if God is mentioned, it is "the pure in heart" who shall see him, the "peace-makers" who shall be called his "sons." It is the simple religion of righteousness and brotherhood. Jesus seems to have cared for little else. He preached "mercy and not sacrifice." He ordered men to leave the altar until they were reconciled to others. This reconciliation was itself the best prayer: "for if ye forgive others, your heavenly Father will forgive you,"— and he will not otherwise. Forgiveness was the true religion, — and must be repeated "seventy times seven" times. This was also taught

among his disciples, one of whom wrote that "if we love one another, God dwelleth in us," for "God is love." Love was itself God and the only way to find him. Saint Jerome tells how John, when an old man, kept repeating, "Love one another"; — and how, when asked why he said no more, he replied that no more was needed. So did early Christianity promise to perfect the union which the Roman empire had brought.

But the promise failed. Between barbarians without and corruption within, that uniting empire went to pieces. Even before it fell, Christianity fell worse; — fell from its high ideals of harmony to things that divided. It separated into sects quarreling over theological questions. It opposed the social sentiments with ascetic practices, and sought sanctity by fasts and bodily penance rather than by brotherhood. Many a holy hermit abandoned his own children to save his soul, and a nun was said to have been sent to Purgatory for loving her mother too much. Formal observances were again exalted until they seemed holier than innocence itself. Baptism, which Paul once thanked God he had practised so little, came to be thought more important than purity; and ceremonies to atone for a crime seemed more meritorious than not to commit it. Such opinions prevailed for cent-

uries, and Jesus' religion of love was so buried that his professing followers sometimes sought to serve him by slaying each other.

Yet, all this time, the tendency to union was also active, and was aided much by Christianity. Whatever the quarrels of the Church, it still taught brotherhood. Amid all the divisions of the falling empire and of the feudal system, the Christian name and organization kept alive the feeling of unity. Even the Crusades helped to unite Europe, and the wars which followed them were partly redeemed by gathering conquered peoples into great nations again.

But the union has been furthered more by the *secular* forces that revived with the renaissance. The arts undermined intolerance. Learning linked men of even different religions and races in a common cause and sympathy. Advancing science softened bigotry; and the agnostic spirit began to show the folly of quarreling over questions about which neither side knew anything. Increasing commerce joined the nations ever more closely, and economics slowly learned that the interests of each were the interests of all.

The harmony of nations and the folly of their quarrels was also taught more and more by *eminent men*, from Sully and Grotius onward. Voltaire wrote

most earnestly against wars. Benjamin Franklin said there never had been and never would be a good one. Jeremy Bentham denounced war as "mischief on the largest scale." Robert Hall condemned it as "the temporary repeal of all the principles of virtue." Carlyle asked whether the French and English soldiers who "blow the souls out of one another" have any real reason for it; and he answered: "Busy as the devil is, not the slightest." Long before General Sherman, Channing said that a battlefield is a vast "exhibition of crime," and that "a more fearful hell in any region of the universe cannot well be conceived." Auguste Comte closed his "Positive Philosophy" with congratulation that the old evil was ending; and at about the same time Emerson wrote that "war is on its last legs" and "begins to look like an epidemic insanity." Charles Sumner called it "international lynch-law" with works "infinitely evil and accursed"; and he said that the greatest value of the Springfield arsenal was that it had inspired Longfellow's poem against war. Theodore Parker wrote: "Posterity will damn into deep infamy that government which allows a war to take place in the middle of the nineteenth century." Even during our Mexican war, Parker denounced it as "mean and infamous,"—as not only a "great boy fighting a

little one," but as a fight where "the big boy is in the wrong, and tells solemn lies to make his side seem right." So Lowell opposed that war of his own country, — made Hosea Biglow "call it murder," and made Parson Wilbur rebuke it in behalf of a higher "patriotism" and of that truer country which is not territory, but justice. In 1848 and 1849, great Peace Congresses for international arbitration and disarmament met in Brussels and Paris. At the latter, Victor Hugo predicted the day when cannon would be obsolete and seen only in museums, as curiosities. Even England, during a whole generation of peace, had reached the "belief that wars were things of the past"; and Buckle soon after wrote that the national taste for them had become "utterly extinct."

The work of union continued, and even the wars that followed were sometimes in its favor. Our own Civil War was in the name of "the Union." Italy was at last united again. The great German empire was organized where hundreds of petty States had once opposed each other. But union has been advanced most by the peaceful processes of industry, trade, travel, intercourse of every kind. Victor Hugo contrasted the great Industrial Exposition at Paris, where the nations had come together to learn good from each other, with "that terrible international

exposition called a battlefield." Even the electric flashes through the Atlantic cable moved Whittier to sing, —

> "Weave on, swift shuttle of the Lord,
> Beneath the sea so far,
> The bridal-robe of earth's accord,
> The funeral-shroud of war."

Every peaceable ship is a fuller shuttle for that shroud; every railway-train, with its merchandise and mail, adds its thread to that bridal-robe. Through these secular agencies, human sympathy has already widened until men give their tears and treasure for suffering heathen around the earth whom once they would have thought it sacred duty to slay. The very laws of the world are working for the true Christianity and the final union of mankind.

Not, indeed, that we are near it yet. The nations still try to out-trick each other in trade. In the most "Christian" nations, the citizens sometimes do; and possessions are not shared with perfect brotherhood even in the Church. No longer is Ananias struck dead for keeping back part of his property, but he and Sapphira sit safely in their pew, with no question about their land. No longer is Dives sent to "hell" on account of his wealth, but has become a deacon, and the preacher has found a way to get the camel

through the needle's eye. Nor is Lazarus as peaceful as he used to be. He is ready to dynamite, not Dives only, but every Lazarus who will not join his strike to cut off the country's needed coal or beef.

For the spirit of *violence* still survives to rend society. It inspires not only the poor and ignorant, but their leaders and rulers, and sometimes takes possession of a nation. That long dream of peace to which we have referred was broken by a most destructive series of wars. Those of the ten years ending in 1871 are said by Mulhall to have cost nearly a million and a half of lives and nearly six billions of dollars. Since then, the armaments in Europe have much further increased. A standard new History tells us that the "civilized Christian nations" now occupying the old Roman territory, though no longer in danger from outside barbarians, yet keep "under arms ten or twelve times the forces" of the pagan emperors. Military expenditures are vastly greater than any other. Even in our own country, in 1899, the Naval and War departments and pensions consumed nearly three-fourths of the entire expenditures of the National Government. President Eliot recently reminded us that the sum granted to our great Agricultural Department for a year was "about the cost of one day of the war with Spain"; while the annual

amount given to the beneficent work of fish-culture was less than that spent in maintaining one battleship. Fifty years ago, Charles Sumner said: "Every ship of war that floats costs more than a well-endowed college; every sloop of war, more than the largest library in our country." To-day, battleships are far more costly and numerous, — and eminent Americans who profess much zeal for Christ want to increase them.

They want to use them, too; and even preachers are not always opposed to this. General Francis A. Walker wrote, in 1869, that in five years' pretty constant attendance at church, and in listening to sermons from fifty different pulpits, he had "not heard a single discourse which was devoted to the primitive Christian idea of peace, or which contained a perceptible strain of argument or appeal for international good will." A few years ago we kept our Christmas season of "peace on earth" by a clamor for a mighty war with England about a Venezuelan boundary. Our people and press had just been crying out against the horror of a proposed pugilistic fight between two fools in Texas, but now became eager to send into the ring half a million Christians to engage in battles beside which prize-fights would be bland and benevolent. Some even argued that our national character would be ennobled by a

war, and our moral tone improved by bombarding a few towns and butchering their people. The excitement passed, and how that boundary question was settled few now know or care. But we have since tried that method of ethical training, though on a much smaller and safer scale. The ideals of the battlefield and of the "water-cure" have spread among the people, — yet without the predicted moral improvement. Indeed, violence seems to have become unusually popular, strikers club and kill other workmen with medieval ardor, and now and then a community gathers with the greatest delight to watch the writhings of a Negro burning to death. In pessimistic moments, one sometimes feels that our civilization is little more than a film, beneath which the old savagery is still seething.

These evils, however, are exceptional and we must not make too much of them. A little bad gets all attention, while the great current of good goes on unheeded, just because it is so great and common. The bad may even be a sign of progress; and part of the violence to-day is a passionate outcry against wrongs that have long been allowed and that must be ended. But amid the violence, peaceful methods are advancing, and arbitration is more and more settling labor-troubles and preventing wars. Even the wars

that do come are no longer between the foremost nations, but have mostly sunk into expeditions of some powerful people to conquer some feeble one. Even these inglorious conquests have become so difficult and expensive that they will not often be attempted; while real war between two great powers would be so vastly more so that M. Bloch pronounced it already impossible. Certainly war seems destined to die at length by its own growth, to kill itself by its costliness. Even now, two equal nations could not long continue it without the bankruptcy of both.

So do the laws of progress work for peace. A wise man, when challenged, replied that any fool can propose a duel, but it takes two fools to fight. The nations will yet learn this. Already they are questioning the wisdom of wasting most of their wealth in endless preparation for wars which can be avoided and which cannot come without mutual ruin. Already they see a fallacy in the system which spends millions on a battleship that soon becomes useless by the invention of a better one; and which is forever improving walls to resist cannon, and then improving cannon to destroy the walls. They begin to see the folly of fortifying boundaries at infinite expense, when that long one between us and British America has been safe for nearly a century, without walls or warship,

by mere mutual agreement. They see something worse than folly in the system which uses our noble youth like Falstaff's ragamuffins, — as "food for powder" and "to fill a pit," — and sometimes to fulfill viler purposes. For the moral fallacy, too, is more and more seen. Why condemn brutality and crime at home, and then cultivate them abroad? Why hang for killing one man, and honor for killing a hundred? Why imprison a starving woman for stealing a loaf, — and then praise rulers or soldiers for looting cities and stealing a whole country? Shall justice be abolished by a national boundary, and the moral law stop at the State line?

Emerson once said, "The arch-abolitionist, older than John Brown and older than the Shenandoah Mountains, is Love, whose other name is Justice, which was before Alfred, before Lycurgus, before slavery, and will be after it." That same Love and Justice, older than battle-ships or the brutality that wants them, is still here, — was alive before wars began, and will be after they are ended.

Doubtless this principle of union will work on until it links all nations by just laws, and settles their quarrels by peaceful courts. It will also unite all classes in them. It will not, however, cement society in any spiritless communism like an archaic sponge, or

bind men in any tyrannic labor-union which denies liberty to its members. For individualism also has been an aim in Nature, — from rushing worlds to roaming bees and soaring birds and free souls. The perfect system will combine fraternity with freedom, —"liberty and union, one and inseparable, now and forever."

This principle will perfect religion also. So ancient prophets and apostles taught. So the best modern ones have taught. Dr. Putnam said the one thing he worked for was "the sense of universal unity and brotherhood." Dr. Channing not only made this his chief aim, but saw it as the substance of religion, and said: "The love of God is but another name for the love of essential benevolence and justice." So Emerson declared this sentiment not only "the essence of all religion," but the essence of Deity: —"If a man is at heart just, then in so far is he God; the immortality of God, the majesty of God, do enter into that man with justice." These words seemed profane, but they are almost the same which the apostle wrote: "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us," for "God is love." Some pious people slur love as "not religion," but "only ethics." Only ethics! Only love; — that is, according to the apostle, only *God!* But this is

exactly what pious people were seeking. The "cosmic roots of love" are also those of religion.

Such is the sweep of this principle of union. It is indeed a "cosmic" principle, working from the nebula to now, — from the primal atoms to the perfect civilization and religion. The great Kant adored two wonders, — the stars above and the moral law within. But the two wonders are one, and all the more wonderful because one. The moral law within is the higher music of the same law which "the morning stars sang together" and have been singing ever since. It is sung ever more clearly through creation, — from solar systems up to human society, from nebular mist up to minds that outshine the stars, and to souls and sentiments that hope to outlast the stars. It has brought love. Rather, it is love, and has been love from the first. Its lesson is to work for love now, and to trust the Love eternal.

AN OLD PARABLE EXTENDED

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JESUS' longest parable, repeated also in three forms, is that of "the sower." He rightly gave the subject such prominence, for sowing is a work, not only of half the human race, but of the whole plant-world, and of a large part of creation. It is widely, though unwittingly, carried on by beasts, birds, insects, even by winds and waters, and seems the chief aim of the vegetable world. To produce seed is the end of flowers, leaves, stems, roots, of the entire plant. Other organs may be dwarfed and mostly disappear, other functions may largely fail, — but the *seed-making* is not forgotten. I was vividly impressed by this, one August day, while climbing the great Gray's Peak in the Rocky Mountains. Little by little, in the ascent, the gnarled old pines and spruces shortened their trunks until no taller than a man, — but they still produced their cones as below. Little by little the willows shrank, until no longer than a finger, — but they went to seed all the same. Above the timber-line, the summer herbs more and more contracted their stems and leaves, — but only to

blossom more and brighter. Higher still, a thousand feet above the lingering snow-banks, starved beds, with no more foliage than the finest moss, were yet densely carpeted with flowers of white or pink, and were sometimes bluer than the sky above with forget-me-nots which had forgotten nearly everything except to prepare their seed. Even on the wintry point of the peak, in the crevices of the storm-swept rocks, stunted grass and chickweed were still blossoming and bearing their fruit; while on the rocks, crowded lichens, without any blossoms, spread their dainty cups scattering spores by the million. So notable in Nature is the production of seeds.

Hardly less so is their *protection* when produced. They are guarded by tough pods, prickly burrs, bitter rinds, to keep them from being eaten by animals, — and by hard coats to save them when eaten. Some plants have protective movements so curious as to make them seem almost endowed with mind. Watch a head of common white clover, for instance, and see how its little florets, as fast as fertilized, turn bottom upward, so that in a shower each seed is covered by its calyx as by an umbrella. Notice the familiar dandelions, first held up to gain the light and insects, but then drawn snugly to the ground for safety while their seed is ripening. Or see the eel-grass and water-

lilies blossoming at the surface of the lake, — but then coiling up their long stems, as a sailor does his rope, and drawing the seed-cases to the bottom. So curious are the devices to protect seed.

Still more so are those for *sowing* it widely. Many plants, by cunning springs, throw their seeds, like a catapult, sometimes with much force. Countless species clothe them with barbs and hooks, to fasten upon roving animals and be scattered far; — or with pulpy fruit to bribe the birds to eat and bear them further. Many plants dry into bushy and rounded forms, to be caught by the autumn winds and sent rolling across the prairies, like a patent planter, sowing their seeds as they go. Much more widely are seeds scattered by water, — being built more tightly than a boat, and safely floated the whole length of a river, or even across the ocean. Still more curious is their wide sowing in the wind and by air-ships and sails of many forms. That dandelion not only draws down the seed-head to ripen safely, — but, when ripened, erects it again, even lengthens the stem to lift it still higher; — then unfolds it into a plumy sphere, where each of the hundred florets has spread its calyx into a perfect parachute, and stands waiting for the wind to carry its single seed into the next county. Or see the thistle-head, not only guarded with serried spears

to defend it till ripe, but then opening, unfurling its sepals into silken sails, launching its fairy, fruit-laden fleet into the heavens, — thus making the wind sow one seed in Michigan and its neighbor in Maine. We boast of our aeronautic art; but, ages before Montgolfier or even man, Nature had perfected it, and applied it to agriculture, — had patented all sorts of air-ships among her farming-implements, and was using parachutes not only to scatter seeds broadcast over a continent, but even to plant them right end downward.

Nor should we forget the finer *spores* which in the lower vegetable world serve the same end as seeds, and even in the higher are essential for producing them. These are sown from field to field and from flower to flower by bees, butterflies, and various insects; and the flower itself is often cunningly shaped to get them sown aright. They are sown by the breeze, and floated by their own fineness. They drop from the fern-fronds as dust. They rise from the puff-ball by the million, as mere smoke. They fly from molds and mildews and minuter plants, often in finer form than the microscope can find. They are carried wherever air goes, — and hardly the wit of man can shut them out.

Through this sowing of spores and seeds is wrought

the eternal miracle of the *perpetuation of life.* The summer herbs fail, their leaves fall, the stems die, the very roots rot in the ground, — and the life seems gone forever. Yet, wrapped in these wonderful seeds, it survives the decay ; and, after freezing for months in the soil, or flying about in the winter winds and snows, it unfolds again, and into wider life than before. As in the familiar lines : —

> " ' You think I am dead,'
> A soft voice said,
> ' Because not a stem or root I own ?
> I never have died,
> But close I hide
> In a plumy seed that the wind hath sown.
> Patient I wait through the long winter hours ;
> You will see me again, —
> I shall laugh at you then,
> Out of the eyes of a hundred flowers.' "

Nor do seeds survive merely one winter, but many. Dried for years, they grow again. Drowned, they revive ; — and the mud dredged from the lake-bottom is soon green from their growth. Even behind the fierce fire of forest or prairie, they are soon sprouting, as if the very flames had left some safe in their grave below. They survive eating, acids, perhaps ages. Dr. Lindley, pointing to some raspberry-bushes in his

garden, said they had grown from seeds found in the stomach of a body buried centuries before with coins of the emperor Hadrian.

These physical facts are symbolic of spiritual laws. In the fields of thought and feeling, seeds are continually sown, in some form. One form is that of *words*. Even much more widely than seeds, these are sown and grow. "Winged words," we say; — and so they are. A spoken word flies on wings lighter than bird's or thistle-down, on invisible waves of air swifter than any wind; and not merely in one direction, but in all, so that it may be planted in a thousand ears at once. Written words even cross oceans and ages, and may be sown a thousand times over, with no loss of their vitality. Even though seeming dead, they keep their life. The spoken word of a friend, long forgotten, mysteriously starts up in memory, grows into new deeds, and gives direction to a whole day. Written words older than Hadrian's coins are still growing around us to richer result than those berry-bushes. Jesus' sayings are more vital seeds than botany knows. Sentences of Isaiah and Æschylus are yet sown and bearing fruit every season. The stories of wheat found in the wrappings of Egyptian mummies, and made to grow, may all be fictions; but good words

inscribed in those tombs are still full of life, and stir souls to-day. Indeed, wise words cannot die. They may be buried and lost forever, — as most seeds are; but if found, they are always alive. They are more vital than any seed, — living longer, borne farther, having power to be planted in a myriad places at once and a million times over, but yet to remain as full of life as at first.

Another form of sowing is by *deeds;* — and innumerable are those which have not only shaped history with unending influence, but still inspire mankind. Even the most inconspicuous acts send on their life; — like those invisible spores that rise from lowliest plants to float everywhere and grow. Even without acts or words, the silent thoughts, feelings, character, still speak; — as in that woman who "wrought works that cannot die":

"It was not anything she said,
  It was not anything she did; —
It was the movement of her head,
  The lifting of her lid;
Her little motions when she spoke,
  The presence of an upright soul,
The living light that from her broke, —
  It was the perfect whole.
And as she trod her path aright,
  Power from her very garments stole;

For such is the mysterious might
God grants the upright soul."

So in many ways is truth sown in the world, as seed by the winds. It is sown even by those who have no heed for it, — like those barbed fruits carried by the fur of animals. It is sown even by those who seem to have destroyed it; — like those berry-seeds eaten by birds, but only to be planted more widely. Often in history a truth has thus owed more to its foes than to its friends. It grows by opposition, and even survives the flames of martyrdom better than seeds do the prairie fires. It cannot be destroyed. Much of it may fall on unfit places, and fail; but whenever finding a soul ready for it, it grows. Thus the losses in one place are met by gains in another, and the moral and religious life of the world is preserved undiminished.

That life is not only thus preserved, but *improved*; — and this is a further step in our parable. In the plant-world few of the innumerable seeds find room to thrive. Only the fittest can grow to ripeness and reproduction. Thus Nature is constantly weeding out the weaker, selecting the more suitable, — aiding advance. Through this process, patiently continued through those seasons of the Lord whose days are a

thousand years, seems to have come much of the vegetable progress, from algæ of the primal seas up to our stately forests and flowery fields.

But the social and *moral evolution* is quite as evident as the physical. Error is weak and has to give way. Only truth is "fittest" and finally survives. In the intellectual world, it is sure to win, — aided by every agitation and even opposition; so that Paul well said, "We can do nothing against, but for the truth." In the moral world, the right wins by the same principle; and, though often suppressed, shows a general advance. See the moral progress, from primitive savages eating each other, to modern cities sending shiploads of food to the needy around the earth. See the religious progress, since even the Biblical Psalmist prayed for an opponent: "Let his days be few, and his wife a widow"; "let there be none to extend mercy unto him, neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children." See the advance, from the fierce persecutions urged even by the Church only a few centuries ago, to the universal charity preached in so many pulpits to-day. Plainly the spiritual world shows evolution as well as the vegetable. In both alike, the sowing not only preserves, but advances life, by the mere laws of Nature.

But the notable thing in Jesus' parable is that it takes us beyond unaided Nature, to *human art*, — and thereby gives us a higher lesson. He illustrated the "kingdom of heaven," not by the forests and wilds sowing all seeds at random, but by a man who "went forth to sow," — and again by "a man sowing good seed in his field." For by man's sowing comes a far faster progress than Nature's. She sows indiscriminately, everything and everywhere, — leaving the fitter forms to fight their own way, and to win by the slow process of natural selection. But man takes the selection and sowing into his own hands, and carries them further. He selects, not merely after the sowing, like her, but before, and sows only the best. He selects, not only the best species, but the best spots for their growth. He not only sows, but protects and cultivates. By this continued selection and cultivation of the better varieties as they arise, his progress leaves Nature's far behind; — and Thoreau said, man made trees bear fruit that God never gave them. Nature's growths seem about the same as ages ago; — but art has developed the wild grains and fruits into richer of countless kinds, and one flower into several hundred varieties. Schliemann said he found still growing, on the top of Mount Gargarus, the same violets and hyacinths which Homer pictured there for the couch

of Zeus and Hera. But whatever may have been Homer's flowers, hyacinths have since been so developed that two thousand varieties of them are said to have been cultivated in Holland a century ago.

We would not boast too much of human art. The majestic pines of California grew without it. The calypso blooms in its native bog, and the cactus on the desert sands, with a glory that mocks our gardens. But, in general, our orchards and greenhouses far outdo the wilderness. By the aid of human culture, the prairies, on which the buffaloes recently roamed, are to-day feeding foreign nations; and the forests in which a few hunters led a half-starved life have given way to populous States and the comforts of civilization. So does art improve the produce of the soil.

No less does it improve the produce in the social and spiritual field. Here, too, the progress has largely come through human effort and interference with natural instincts. By such efforts, — in governments and laws and schools and churches, — savage passions have been cleared off, better principles planted in their place, and these improved by continual culture, like grain and grapes. Not that we would carry culture to excess, and war against Nature, like the preachers of "total depravity." We do not need to be contin-

ually harrowing children's minds, any more than meadows; — and much of the spiritual field, like our noble forest-parks, wants no replanting. Many of the best human qualities grow like the pines, without even pruning, and often on unpromising soil. In real kindness and devotion, the peasant's cottage often outdoes the colleges; and sometimes the very slums shame the sanctuaries.

But, in general, the best fruits, of soil and society alike, demand culture. Will the finest thoughts flourish without being planted? No more than wheat. Leave Nature to sow that, and see what you will get! Even when planted, will the best principles thrive without care? Try it in the corn-field, and you find the crop soon choked with a lower growth. Human nature, like the soil, is full of poor seeds, and every wind sows more of them. Nature prefers them, too; — is partial to her own wild children, and not fond of the more refined step-daughters of culture. She likes weeds better than corn, rude strength more than righteousness; and without continued care of the higher growth, you will hardly get back as much as was planted. Even that will hardly be as good as was planted. For there is a law of "reversion," the naturalists say, by which an improved form, if left untrained, tends to return to its wild parent.

Though favoring advance, Nature wants it slow, like hers, and puts back our more rapid progress when she can; — makes our rich grains and graces alike "revert" to ruder forms; makes our best vines and virtues soon degenerate. Not only for making progress, but for keeping what is made, there must be continued planting of the best.

What, then, should be planted? The good principles from *the past;* — for this is the lesson of sowing. Many indeed seem to doubt it. They say we have now entered a new and scientific era, which should cut loose from the old days of ignorance and start life anew. But the farms rebuke that philosophy. The crops cannot cut loose from the past. The modern farmer may invent new and scientific methods of reaping and sowing, — but he cannot invent the seed. The despised past produced it for him, and had to improve it for ages before he could glory in his grain-fields and agricultural fairs. Civilization has grown in the same way; and the reformer who boasts his independence of the past would do well to try the experiment first on his farm, — burn up his seed-corn, and try to manufacture better by his boasted machinery. Wise men, from Confucius to Goethe, have agreed that the great saving principles have all been taught

of old, and only need to be kept growing, with ever wider use and improvement. Wise men revere ancient laws and literatures, and Jesus well said, "Search the Scriptures."

But he said "search" them, — and perhaps that is the word he emphasized. "*Search* the Scriptures," — not accept them indiscriminately. "Search" for the good, *select* the best, keep and cultivate that, and let the poorer go; — just as Paul said, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." In practice, too, Jesus followed this principle of selection which we have traced; and he abandoned much even in the Bible. He left behind all its elaborate sacrificial Law, and said the Lord wanted "mercy and not sacrifice." He seems to have dropped some even of its Decalogue, and, in quoting, always omits a part. He not only omits the Sabbath law, but so violated it that one New Testament passage says he had "broken the Sabbath," and another that he "keepeth not the Sabbath day." He even contradicts the Scripture, and quotes words from its very Law, — such as "eye for eye and tooth for tooth," — expressly to deny them. Indeed, the most of that Law he virtually denied, and long chapters and collections of its ceremonial orders his teachings winnowed away as worthless chaff. Much else in the Old Testament, — all its precepts and practices of

vengeance and hate, — Jesus treated as worse than worthless. All its intolerance was attacked in his teaching; — like those "tares" which he ordered to "burn."

But though rejecting the weeds in old Scriptures, Jesus kept the wheat; and though winnowing away its ritual chaff, he kept its kernels of righteousness and love. He gathered these in his Beatitudes, and made them the essentials and only essentials of religion. He gave the Golden Rule as the sum of "the Law and the Prophets"; — just as Paul said "Love is the fulfilling of the Law." This is the seed which Jesus selected and sowed and taught his followers to sow.

But he also foresaw that this best religious sowing would suffer from hostile conditions. He said it would not grow much when falling on "stony places" or "among thorns" or "by the wayside"; — and that even where it grew, the "tares" would soon be sown among it and choke its growth. History has shown that he was quite correct in this. Part of the Church-field has been "good ground," where his seed has brought forth "some thirty-fold" and "some a hundred-fold." But much of it has been "stony" with old prejudices which did not allow it to take root. Much has been full of the "thorns" of savage pas-

sions and selfish policies, where "the care of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word." Much has been "by the wayside" of formal routine, and along hardened paths of habit, where "it was trodden under foot" and kept from growing. Even where Jesus' teachings have grown, they have often been crushed to death in quarrels about him and his nature. The Church has often ceased to gather his true grain of righteousness, and has harvested instead all sorts of theological straw and ritual stubble. Even the old intolerance and hate were soon sown again in many forms, and the Church sometimes zealously devoted itself to the burning of the Christian wheat and to the cultivation of "tares."

Hence the seed that has been handed down needs much cleaning to-day. Much worthless ceremonial chaff needs to be blown away. Much worse intermixture of unrighteous weeds needs to be burned, as Jesus said. The old parable reads that they should not be burned until "the end of the world"; — but that is because the writer thought the world was going to end right away. Had he known it would last nineteen hundred years, he would doubtless have wanted them burned sooner. At any rate, the tares of intolerance, in any form, have been the worst foe of Christ. They have grown in every land to choke charity; they

have leaved out in unjust laws and edicts and acts of persecution; they have blossomed blood-red in hundreds of battlefields and in the flames of countless martyrdoms; they have ripened seeds of hate that are still growing in the religious fields. They have done more than anything else to kill the Christian spirit, and ought to be treated without the least tenderness. Whatever teachings increase hate in the world are infinitely worse than any weeds. We ought at least to pluck them out of our own minds; and we may be allowed to protest against their culture in the minds of others, — to be sown through the community like thistle-down.

Nor need we, in opposing any intolerant doctrines, follow the cautious maxim to wait until we have perfected better to put in their place. Their empty place is far better than they are. To save them until we get some perfect system is like saving wolves until the lambs are born, or saving serpents until we get singing-birds to "put in their place." We may always rebuke any form of wrong without waiting until we have elaborated the highest religion. Indeed, we already have the highest religion, in the simple truths of righteousness which Jesus selected and sowed.

Not that this religion came from him alone, or that he ever claimed so. He saw it, not only in the Hebrew

Scriptures before him, but in the heresies and heathenisms around him. He told the parable of the good Samaritan expressly to picture that heretic as holier than the venerated "priest" and "Levite," and he habitually showed more sympathy with "publican" and pagan humanities than with the professional piety of either the Jewish priesthood before him or the Christian after him.

For the "good seed" has been growing under many names and forms. Christianity may be the best historic religion, — the wheatfield in the kingdom of God. But that does not make it the only good religion, any more than wheat is the only good grain. The same starch which makes the worth of wheat is found in all other grains; and the same righteousness which makes the worth of Christianity is found in other religions, in various degrees. If good in one, it is good in another. If divine in Christianity, it is divine wherever found. Much of the preaching against heathen faiths is as if the wheat farmer should denounce rye as an ungodly cereal, or corn as a crop from Satan. Much of the missionary effort to make pagan nations adopt our theologic dogmas is like an effort to make them adopt our diet. If we must pity the poor Chinaman for preferring rice, or the Mohammedan for eating bananas, we ought not to denounce them for it.

It is wiser to partake with them occasionally. Probably in religion, as in life, the best diet is a varied one, confined to no single faith, but gathering good things from all, and combining their diversities.

This lesson of variety and combination is taught even in our parable. Not only is there great diversity of grains, but every "good seed" has come from the union of opposite *sexes*. Even many of the smaller spores are subject to the same law. Only the earliest and lowest forms of life are without sex. Thenceforth, through the advancing series, the union of male and female elements becomes more important; — and no true seed has ever been produced without it. Still further, the union of diversities is taught; — for the higher orders not only thus unite two sexes, but often unite them only from two different flowers or even from two different plants. They show many a curious device to prevent self-pollination from the same blossom or plant, and a large part of them make it quite impossible by producing the pollen only in another. To bring it from elsewhere, even the winds and insects are engaged; — as the Greek Theophrastus taught, 300 B. C., and as recent botanists have traced to a surprising extent. To grasses, sedges, conifers, and many forest trees, it is brought by the breezes. To more conspicuous blossoms, it is brought by bees and

butterflies. Even the honey and perfumes are said to be but baits to bribe insects to this work; and many think that even the colors are lures to attract them. Often, — as in orchids and milkweeds, — the flower is most curiously constructed so as to make the bee unwillingly load himself with packages of pollen from one blossom, and unload them in another. Many of the irregular shapes of flowers are adapted to the same end, — to engage insects for this important work of *cross-fertilization.* Florists carry the work still further, even to the crossing of different varieties, and thus obtain new and richer.

So does even the plant-world protest against exclusiveness, and proclaim the need of variations, contrasts, combinations, crossings. Probably the religious world has the same need. The highest religion will be no one-sided or one-sexed movement, such as is now too often seen; but, like every seed, will come from the marriage of contrasts, from the wedding of finest feminine feeling with most fearless masculine thought. The highest religion will show no exclusiveness; but, like the most advanced flowers, will welcome variations, and even wish to be cross-fertilized from without. It will take truth from whatever source, as the pine-cone gathers pollen from every breeze. Its best missionaries will be no sectarian preachers trying to

impose some single faith; but all men and movements, however secular and unintentional, that are aiding intercommunication among the sects, bringing an interchange between them, as bees do between the flowers. From this *cross-fertilization of faiths* will come a more charitable, vigorous, and richer religion, flowering in sweeter sentiments and ripening a larger harvest of human brotherhood.

Such are a few of the lessons involved to-day in the parable of the sower. Chief of them is that old one, — to keep on ever selecting and sowing the best. This is about all that we need to emphasize; — for if we will but sow aright, Nature will take care of the growth. As another form of the parable said, though the sower might afterward sleep, yet "the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how; for the earth bringeth forth fruit of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." We need not even spend much time warring against the tares, — for sowing is one of the best ways to do this. On the western plains you may see wide fields of alfalfa clover, a great sea of richest green without a weed in sight, though millions are choking beneath. Get the religion of love once well started, and the weeds will not trouble us. The tares will die out of themselves.

The good grain will grow "night and day," while we wake and while we sleep. It will bring the blessed fruit of a better brotherhood. It will bring more faith in that divine Power which everywhere, in soil and society and souls, works this miracle of the seed, and which follows every fall of leaves with the resurrection of a larger life.

THE DIVINITY OF MAN

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THE divinity of man seems much less clear to-day than it did a few centuries ago. Then he was thought made by the hand and "in the image of God." Not only was he guarded by divine care, but the great earth had been created especially for his home. Even the heavens were made for him, — the sun for his light by day, the moon and all the myriad stars for his lamps by night.

But such thoughts have been fading before the modern sciences. First came astronomy, showing that little sun a million times larger than the earth, and turning those star-lamps into other and often vaster suns, beneath which our earth seemed to shrink to an atom, and our importance to shrivel with it. So many of them were found, too; — their millions multiplying with every advance in optical art, each one a world and a supposed center of a system of worlds. The Psalmist was right: "When I consider the stars, what is man, that thou art mindful of him?" Another great Hebrew writer sublimely represented the Creator weighing the mountains in scales and the hills in a

balance, and counting nations as but the fine dust of the balance. But to-day the dust of his balance is seen to be, not merely nations, but constellations in which our whole earth would count as nothing. So has astronomy mocked those medieval thoughts.

Geology has mocked them further. It has taught that even this atom of an earth was not made for us, but was filled with life for countless ages before us. Through immeasurable eons, its lands were rich with forests, but with no lumbermen to cut them. Through earlier and vastly longer periods, its seas swarmed with rich life, but with no human being to profit by it. To the geologist, man, instead of being the aim of creation, seemed more like an afterthought, — and very near not getting created at all.

Even when created, he appeared far from divine, and each succeeding science seemed to leave him lower. Anthropology pointed to his low origin, savage and even animal. Physiology added that he is still animal; — with his boasted mind closely connected with the folds of his brain and the flow of his blood, and with his soul quite dependent on the state of his stomach. Chemistry analyzed brain, blood, heart, without finding any soul. All the sciences, too, showed life following fixed laws, which seemed to disprove divine care, and to leave no need of a God

except at creation. Finally came the doctrine of evolution, seeming to add that there was no such need even at creation, but that mere matter contained the "promise and potency" of all life, and that the primal nebula of itself had developed into planets, plants, men, mind, morals, — as naturally as a seed into a tree or an egg into an eagle. Man, instead of being divinely created in the "image of God," seemed only to have grown out of a gastrula, and out of a gas behind that. So low did the modern sciences seem to degrade us.

But it was a false alarm. A little thought shows that they do not degrade us at all. Even *astronomy* does not. In Fontenelle's famous "Plurality of Worlds," the charming marquise declares that the doctrine of the earth's inferiority will not humiliate her: "I assure you that I esteem myself no less for it." Nor need she, for anything that astronomy has shown. However small the earth, it seems to rank well among the planets. In Voltaire's "Micromegas," a huge visitor from the great Saturn, after trying in vain with his coarse eyes to see any inhabitants on earth, concluded that there could be none, — since, he said, it was so contemptibly small a world that no creatures of good sense would inhabit it. But to-day the earth is gen-

erally admitted to be a far more sensible place to live than his own Saturn. The British lady, traveling in Asia, resented being called a foreigner, and said, "No! It's you natives that are foreigners; — I am English." Many things seem to indicate that our earth is the little England of the solar system, and that, when we travel, we shall be entitled to treat the natives of the larger planets with British condescension.

Nor need the immensity of the sun shame us. Indeed, it is very gratifying to learn that he is so great, since he is still our servant, rising faithfully every morning to strike the light and start the fire, and to work for us in a thousand ways. Even the stars send us a pleasant message, in showing our universe so rich in room and real estate. Astronomy, after all, has not mocked man in the least, but only shown him the grandeur of his world.

No more has *geology*, in showing the age of the earth. Indeed, it would seem more honorable to have our world made with such vast expense of time and power, like a royal palace, than hastily in a week, like a pioneer's cabin. Even that long succession of life on earth before man, instead of dishonoring him, was really a vast retinue of servants getting it ready for his arrival. Those forests were making coal and oil for him to burn, and better air for him to breathe.

Those animals were helping to make the rocks to be built into his walls and to be ground into his farms. Geology seems rather to have raised the rank of man, by showing this infinite preparation for him.

Nor is the divine care made any less by this rigid reign of *law and order*, but rather is shown more faithful by it. The rigid order is itself kinder than any interference with it would be. Ancient literature has many old stories of the sun stopping in the sky, at various times, to help a few people. But such stories showed far less providence than does the daily sun we see, forever moving with such faithfulness to help all mankind, and never arrested to mock their trust and derange their day. They showed far less marvel, too; and Ruskin refused to wonder at the tales of the sun stopping, and said he always was expecting it would stop, — the miracle was rather in its going so steadily. So in everything: to a wise man it is the going rather than the stopping that makes the marvel. However much miracle he may see in the many old stories of rivers suddenly standing still, as if gravitation had given out, — he will see far more in our familiar Mississippi forever flowing with such force, forever refilled with waters that have been fetched from far-off seas and fallen in rains to refresh

a myriad farms, — as if from the very hand of Providence. However much miracle he may see in the story of the blasted fig-tree, he will see infinitely more in our millions of trees unblasted by summer drought or winter frost, and full of a life which no botany can explain and no familiarity make less mysterious.

Wisdom will see miracle in all life, and especially in human life. Edwin Arnold tells of watching one day, in the South Kensington Museum, a graceful English girl looking at the exhibition of the various chemical elements that compose a human body. It made him think of the marvelous power in Nature, which could combine those dead elements into the beautiful being who stood before him overflowing with life and loveliness; and which could still more marvelously make her the sacred shrine for the reproduction and perpetuation of that life. Miracles are common, said he, closing his paragraph. Yes, common as the cradle. And to the wise man every human birth, with its unfathomable mystery of life and love, is miraculous.

No life or process is any less divine because following laws. For a law of Nature is nothing but the regular way in which the power within it works, and no more explains that work than the railway-track explains the power of the rushing train. The fidelity of life to law no more disproves deity than the fidelity of that

train to the time-table disproves the conductor. Indeed, just as the very precision with which that train reaches the station at the right minute proves that it has a conductor, so the precision with which a planet reaches its occultation at the appointed second seems to suggest that the universe has one too. A poet well said that the laws of the world are but the habits of God; and modern science has only been showing that those habits are regular, and hence this God more faithful than our fathers knew. The universal reign of laws that can always be trusted would seem to be the best proof of divine care.

Nor does even the theory of *evolution* deny this care, — but shows only a further extension of that thought of order. Creation through evolution is simply creation through law, and only extends through time the idea already extended through space. Law had already been found everywhere in the present, making universal order; and evolution only adds that it has been everywhere in the past also, making that order eternal and perfect. It does not make creation any less divine, but all the more so, because infinite, filling eternity instead of a week. John Fiske said every one of the changes supposed in the theory of evolution can be regarded as "the creative action of God"; and John Weiss said every one is "God's dis-

tinct statement that he is on the spot." The theory does not make man's origin any less divine.

And how else can it disgrace him? How can it degrade the human race to have been developed from a gastrular form, when every person in it is still so developed? When every one of us started from a cell a few years ago, how can we be disgraced by supposing that our race so started a few million years ago? Rather, the theory gives new dignity to human nature, by showing it to be the outcome of an infinite process. It makes the creation of man no mere work of a day, but of all the ages and agencies of time. The gathering of the nebula and globing of the earth, the crystallization of rocks and condensation of seas, the lifting of lands and long succession of living forms; — all these infinite changes are seen as steps in the creation of man. He appears no late addition to the earth, no mere inheritor of its riches, but the chief aim of its activities, the being to whose creation suns and seas and all the geologic eons have contributed their life. Surely such a theory does not degrade us.

Nor do any ancestors that science may see fit to give us. Henry Ward Beecher said he should consider it more honorable to have been created from monkeys than from mud. Lowell, lying "under the willows" that June day, said he cared not whether men

trace their origin to "ape or Adam," but was inclined to think a tree among his progenitors. Would it not indeed be more honorable to have had the lowest ancestors, and to have risen from them, than to have had perfect ones, and then fallen into total depravity, — as used to be taught?

And we may notice, in passing, that the Bible itself corrects that doctrine. It teaches that our first parents were far from perfect, and that their loss of Eden was not a fall but a rise. The *Eden* of the Bible, though blessed with abundant food and easy living, still shows them leading a lazy and low life, — much indeed like that still seen in fertile tropical lands. They are pictured in the story as being in a very backward state, almost animal; — naked and not even knowing it; disliking work and considering it a curse; ignorant and unmoral, not having yet tasted of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil." And though by tasting it they lose that Eden of animal ease and ignorance, — just as mankind has lost it, — still they lose it only to gain something better. They are indeed driven out to a life of toil and hardship, and of ceaseless hunger for higher things; but that change is itself a rise rather than a fall, and even Jehovah says so, in the story. The wise serpent had declared that by eating of that fruit of forbidden knowledge

they would become "as gods"; and after they have eaten it, Jehovah also declares that they have so become, —"as one of us," like the gods. This certainly was no fall. To leave their naked animal life, to go to work, to gain knowledge, to learn the difference between good and evil, to become godlike, — that was certainly a rise.

That old Biblical story not only is thus a story of human progress, but, as such, it relieves *Eve* and her sex from the censure they have so long suffered. It makes her take a leading part in progress, just as women always have done. It honors her as the first to see that this fruit, which Adam feared, was "to be desired to make one wise" and godlike. It honors her as the first to pluck of that blessed fruit of knowledge, — just as she has been in many a place. It then makes her persuade her slower husband to partake of it, — just as she still does in countless families in America.

So, thanks largely to her, our ancestors lost that lazy Eden of ease and animal content, and went out to a life of labor, of thought, of unrest, of hunger, and of endless effort and strife. The new life was indeed harder, but higher, and Jehovah rightly declared that they had thereby become as *gods*. Elsewhere, too, the Bible says as much. One of the Psalms

makes Jehovah say of men, "Ye are gods"; — and Jesus not only quotes the saying, but adds that it "cannot be broken." That other Psalm, which asks the Lord, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" adds, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels"; and the Revised Version even renders it, "but a little lower than God."

Cannot we still see this godlike in man? That Psalm shows it by his "*dominion*" over flocks and fowl and fish and all things. But how much further man has since carried that "dominion"! He has learned not merely to control, but to create. Those "fish" he not only catches, but increases, and sends to fill lakes and rivers where they never were before. Those flocks and fowls he not only multiplies, but makes to take new shapes and colors at his whim, and has created many new varieties. In the vegetable world, he is ever uttering that old divine fiat, "Let the earth bring forth grass and herb and fruit-trees"; and he has created varieties innumerable. He also makes new ground for them to grow in, — redeems deserts and marshes, beats back even the ocean and founds farms and cities on the bottom of the sea, so that the profane proverb says, "God made the earth, but the Dutch made Holland."

He enslaves Nature's agents, — makes the breezes

pump and the brooks grind for him, makes the river fetch his logs to mill and then saw and carry them to market. He invents new agents, — makes explosives by which he gets up earthquakes of his own, rends the rocks, blows out the bottom of rivers, bores through miles of mountains, and builds his roads beneath them. He makes all sorts of curious transformations, — turns foul ore into finest steel, worthless clay into aluminum, banks of sand into glass clear as Nature's crystals, even imitates her crystals so well that, when I asked a girl how she told true diamonds from false, she said: "By seeing what sort of persons they are on." Still more curious changes man makes by his chemistry. Emerson told of seeing a professor turn his old shirts into pure white sugar. The professor does much better now, and out of a refuse of coal-tar makes a saccharine said to be three hundred times sweeter than sugar. He imitates many organic products, — makes perfume of flowers without the flowers, extracts of fruits without the fruits, even butter without cows (though some conservative people prefer the old kind); — and dreams of the day when he shall make beef without them, and gain such control of the elements as to manufacture food without the trouble of farming. He improves upon his own organs, — makes a telescope to see a thousand times farther, a

microscope to see a thousand times finer, and the microphone to hear the footfall of a fly. He even makes diseases destroy themselves, — uses the dreaded germs of many a one to cure it or to keep it away, and so employs the deadly pestilence to promote health and lengthen life.

Indeed, he often makes a danger thus undo itself and do the very thing it forbade. The river-current which forbids him to cross, he forces to ferry him over. The raging sea which shuts him from another continent, he persuades to float him and his freight across. The fierce winds which blow eastward he outwits by his sails and makes to carry him westward instead. Even the waves that want to drown him he turns into steam to carry him faster, and, as Emerson said, fulfills the fable of Eolus' bag, and bears "the two and thirty winds in the boiler of his boat."

Even that electric demon of the storm, which was once thought his worst foe, man has tamed and sends in the signal-service to warn the world when the storm is coming, and so disarms it. "Canst thou send lightnings?" said Jehovah to Job in mockery of man's weakness. "Yes," he replies to-day, "send them and make them"; and he is making them continually to do the mightiest and the most delicate work, to draw

railway-trains or ring a door-bell, to run under the ocean and around the world on his errands, or carry his own voice across the land. The lying Yankee in Europe, boasting what Americans have done, said we no longer use whistles on the railroads, because our trains go so fast that they get to the station before the sound of the whistle does. But we do even better than that now, and in the telephone send a mere whisper fifty times faster than the sound of a whistle goes, and fifty times farther, — so as to save ourselves the trouble of taking a train at all. And many think man has only begun his work with electricity. Even so eminent a scientist as A. R. Wallace said that it might yet be used to increase the crops, to control the clouds, to drive the showers into the night and leave the days clear. In such case a man might order the kind of weather he wants, about as confidently as he would order an omnibus.

"Absurd!" we say. But so has been said of many other things that have since become too trite to attract attention. Said Calonne to the queen, "If what you want is difficult, it is done; if it is impossible, it shall be done"; — and a good deal of such has been done, in the century since. "The impossible comes to pass," says the proverb; and we have seen so much of it come to pass that we begin to expect that the

rest of it will. So does man show that divine "dominion" which the old Psalmist sang.

Nor is this dominion confined to the present, but reaches backward through those *geologic ages* which seemed so to mock him with his insignificance. In his coal-fields, he cuts the forests of the carboniferous era, gathers into his furnaces the gigantic ferns amid which the old megalosauri fought, and brings back the very sunbeams of bygone millenniums to warm his parlor and drive his ships. In his quarries he harvests the riches that those old animals and ages were so kindly accumulating for him, and gets far more good of them than if he had lived there himself. Indeed, by his learning he does live there. The geologist still fishes in the old Devonian seas and has caught there countless creatures of all kinds. He still sails the older Silurian ocean more truly than the trilobites did, and knows its inhabitants much better than they ever knew themselves. Man did not lose those geologic ages, but virtually lives through them all.

Nor is he confined even to the earth, but explores and exploits the *heavens*. Through the tide, he makes the moon heave his ship over the bar and turn his mill-wheel on many a coast. He makes the sun raise and ripen his crops, even paint his portraits and make the most perfect pictures of all sorts in the fraction

of a second. He has already invented a steam-engine that runs by mere sunshine, and which Ericsson said would yet draw his railway-trains, so that he would literally fulfill Emerson's saying and hitch his wagon to a star. He virtually makes the heavenly bodies come to him. By his telescope he makes the moon come the most of the way, and by the spectroscope he makes the sun come all the way and have its gases analyzed as if he had them in his laboratory. He even weighs the sun and puts furthest stars in his scales. He even weighs them without seeing them. For instance, a double star in the constellation Auriga is so distant that its two points become to us only one two-hundredth of a second apart, — that is, nearer together than a man's two eyes would appear if they could be seen from a thousand miles away. Of course no telescope can begin to separate those stars, yet Dr. Huggins says the astronomer easily does it by his spectroscope, and tells, besides, how fast each is moving, and how much each weighs. This speaks well for the power of man. If he could traverse that vast distance and weigh those stars with his arm, how mighty he would be! But how much more so to sit majestically at home, and weigh them with his mind, without even seeing them!

So has astronomy, which seemed to mock man with

his littleness, been showing his greatness instead. One who can comprehend the heavenly movements need not feel mocked by their magnitude. To comprehend meant originally to embrace, to include; — and mind does include all it comprehends. The astronomer is greater than any orb or orbit which he can compute. The heavens are indeed high, but man would never have found it out if he had not been higher. They praise, not only their Creator, but also the creature who has explored them; — and, better than in Comte's day, "the heavens declare the glory of man" too.

But this work with physical things does not show man's highest quality. I speak of them because they are what had most mocked him with his weakness. But his greatness is seen best not in his physical sciences and material inventions, but in his finer arts, his thoughts of things invisible, his work with a world subtler than that of science, his achievements of imagination by which he has created ideal worlds of his own. Often these ideals have been mightier than material things. The thoughts of Plato have outlasted the conquests of Alexander; the arts of Greece have had more influence than all her armies; the fancies of Shakespeare have been stronger than the fleets of Elizabeth; and such is the power of song that Long-

fellow said the hand of Burns still guided every plough in Scotland.

Such are some of the ways in which man has shown his power. These brilliant deeds are of course the work of comparatively few men; but they are the work of faculties that are common to all, in one degree or another, — and hence are entitled to be taken to illustrate human nature.

But diviner than even the mind of man is his *moral* sentiment. It begins narrow in the love of the sexes, but grows beyond lovers to their offspring, with such power that the old Hindu poem said: "A mother's heart outweighs the earth; a father's fondness goeth forth beyond the skies." It goes beyond the family, to bind men in societies and sacred movements, making them ready to give their lives for a country or a cause, — as John Brown did for freedom, and Jesus for human brotherhood.

Nor are such sacrifices confined to Christianity. Herodotus tells how in his youth, 500 years before Christ, two Greeks gave themselves as victims to avert evil from their country; — and did it not merely in a moment's excitement, but voluntarily made the long journey to the Persian capital expressly to be put to death, and then refused to accept office from Xerxes, even to save their lives. Innumerable are those who

have given their lives for a cause they thought sacred: —

> "Up from undated time they come,
> The martyr-souls of heathendom,
> And to Christ's cross and passion bring
> Their fellowship of suffering."

Their fellowship of forgiveness, too. Xenophon told how an unnamed Armenian urged forgiveness for the king who had condemned him to death, — much as Jesus did for his murderers. Human godlikeness did not have to wait for Christianity. Even so orthodox a man as Father Taylor, when asked if any other human being had ever been so good as Jesus, is said to have replied, "Millions." All who love show the inmost essence of divinity, if "God is love."

Of course, human nature shows qualities quite the opposite of these. Pascal said man is both the glory and the scandal of the universe; and even in the most advanced times the scandals often outweigh the glories. Our great material progress has not been attended by a corresponding moral progress. With all the immense advance in science and mechanical art, there seems little advance in character, and one often questions whether we have any nobler men to-day than are portrayed by old heathen Plutarch and in many a page of

ancient history. Mr. Dooley thinks that true progress would be shown not by sky-scraping buildings, but by sky-scraping men. Our progress in comforts and luxuries is nothing very divine; and our power to get a great deal, and to go everywhere, is hardly so noble as our fathers' power to live nobly at home without these. Mr. Ruskin ridiculed men for being so eager to travel fast from one place to another, without doing any noble work in either, and for boasting their power to send a telegram to India when they had none worth sending. He questioned whether even railroads had blessed life to any great extent, and pointed to one that had spoiled a beautiful valley where Apollo and the sweet muses of light used to be seen. Now, the beauty is gone, and the gods are gone with it; — and the only gain is that "every fool in Buxton can be in Bakewell in half an hour, and every fool in Bakewell in Buxton." His statement is extravagant, of course, yet tells the truth that our material progress has little aided moral character.

It was well told too in that old French story of the huge visitor from Saturn, who thought the earth so small that no sensible men would live on it. By means of a microscope, he finally found men, and, on learning the wonderful sciences and arts of these "invisible

insects," he concluded that they must be "all spirit" and lead a most divine life. Far from it, one of them replied; the mass of men were both barbarous and foolish; — and in proof of this he referred to the war then going on between Russia and Turkey, where a great army wearing hats were fighting another wearing turbans. So, he said, all over the earth, from time immemorial, men had been robbing and slaying each other by the thousands in the foolishest quarrels over some piece of land or petty question of politics or religion. Very idiotic and fiendish it seemed to that author. So it did to Benjamin Franklin, who soon after wrote that other story of an angel visiting earth and, at sight of a naval battle in the West Indies, thinking he had been taken to hell instead. "No," said the guide; "this is earth, and these are men; — devils never treat each other in that cruel manner; they have more sense and more of what men call humanity."

Doubtless man is not all divine. Byron called him half deity, half dust. The dust is apt to be the more conspicuous half, too, and sometimes seems very poor dust. Oh, we can keep the good old doctrine of depravity. The depravity is plain enough, and needs no catechism to prove it, but is shown in every newspaper.

It has had its place, too, in human development; — and man's worst passions were helpful in the earlier stages of society. But with progress they have been giving way to a diviner nature, as that Biblical story told; so that the depravity is nowhere "total," as it used to be called. The very calling it that disproved it; for if man had been totally depraved he never would have found it out. A thoroughly bad man never knows that he is bad. As soon as he sees that he is bad he has begun to grow better. The doctrine of depravity was only man's censure of his lower nature by his higher, and was proof that he was leaving his lower behind. His depravity is only the relics of the old animal nature, and does not at all disprove his divinity.

Nor is the divinity any less because so closely connected with *matter*. Indeed, matter itself, as science sees it to-day, shows rather divine qualities. The late Dr. Martineau, criticizing the modern tendency to deny spirit and ascribe everything to matter, said: "But such extremely clever matter, matter that is up to everything, even to writing Hamlet and finding out its own evolution," seems a little too modest in disclaiming the attributes of mind. And not only in man, but everywhere, matter to-day shows rather spiritual qual-

ities. "Dead matter," we used to say; — yet it has proved rather more alive than spirit was once thought to be. Hear science describe a snowflake, for instance, — so miraculously crystallized, its molecules more than you could count in a lifetime, each hydrogen atom forever flying at the rate of over a mile in a second, and colliding with others several thousand times a second, — besides being perhaps a cunning vortex-ring revolving eternally. No wonder the wit said science denied free will to man and gave it to atoms. Matter seems marvelous enough. Or take other forces called physical. Think how electricity flashes through the cable, leaves the message in England before the American finger is off the key, and is in many ways more wonderful than any ghost or god of old story. Think how light speeds more swiftly from the stars, and, after a century's flight through space, tells its story so truly.

If man were no more than these things, he would still seem rather *spiritual*. But he is more, for he has mastered them. Those atoms are coarse compared with the thought that has found them, and that has analyzed movements which no microscope can show. That lightning is weak compared with the mind that can make it and make such use of it. That light.

though it would fly across the continent before you could wink, is still sluggish compared with the man who can overtake it; — as Foucault did when he timed the flight of a ray through his room, and found it took only one thirty-sixth part of the millionth of a second (not precisely that, of course, but somewhere in that neighborhood). These wonders tell of something in man we may as well call spiritual. And all the more spiritual it seems in those moral aspects, — love, devotion, and readiness to die for an ideal. Tyndall said the passage from brain to consciousness is unthinkable; and perhaps we should add that the passage from brain to conscience is more so.

Man seems also to share the divine quality of infinitude. Unlike other animals, he cannot be satisfied. Even his avarice is infinite. He thinks he wants only a few thousand dollars, — but he makes a million, only to be miserable until he makes some more. Most of his misery is not because he has so little, but because he wants so much. We smile at that farmer who always wanted all the land that adjoined his; — yet who would be satisfied with less? Probably the humblest man in America would like to own a county, and the country. But even if he could get the continent, he would want another; — and if he owned

the earth, he would still be eager for the deed of a fine constellation or two, and for a first mortgage on the Milky Way. His infinite avarice may not be commendable, but it is only the infinite in him coming out in a coarse way, and hence it is still significant of his greatness. And how often it comes out in a better way. No knowledge satisfies, — and the most learned man always feels the least so. No moral progress contents, but the good gained always rouses a desire for better. Love, though a giving instead of a getting, grows by the giving. Juliet says to Romeo, "The more I give to thee, the more I have," since love is infinite.

Man seems also to show something of the divine attribute of indestructibility. The servant in the story tried to slay a spirit by cleaving it with a sword; — but thereby only made two spirits, each as active as the one before. This is true of many a human power, which is doubled by what opposes and tries to destroy it. The human spirit gives, in many ways, hints of divine endurance. At any rate, it seems hardly logical to say that invisible atoms are eternally active, but the infinite mind, which has found and measured them, ends in a moment; — that physical force persists forever, but human love, which is the

mightiest force on earth, perishes in an instant. It would seem more reasonable to suppose that the soul, which has so enslaved the light and the lightning, and so mastered the marvels of matter, has possibilities as marvelous as any of them. It would seem more reasonable to trust that the creative Love, which has produced these loves of ours, will continue its good providence for them.

THE WATER OF LIFE

THE WATER OF LIFE

MANY a town has long taken its water from the river by which it stands. But with time and growing population the stream becomes polluted, from farms, mills, factories, cities, sewers. Then the water problem becomes most important. A large party of citizens wish to purify the river by some system of filtration. This is sometimes done with much success, as by the city of Hamburg; but oftener it fails, from the great labor and care required. Some wish to go back of the corruptions, and bring water from the source of the stream. Others wish to bring it from some good lake far away. Many and costly are the methods proposed by the people. Yet, all the while, pure and distilled water is falling from the heavens above them in every shower. It bursts from the hillsides about them in many a spring. Often it lies even in the sandy strata beneath them, a vast reservoir already filtered, forever refilled, and ready to supply the city if only brought to the surface.

Quite similar is the case with what preachers call "the water of life." They are wont to take this from the great stream of Church teaching and tradition, which has flowed down through so many centuries like a river, widening as it goes. This stream has indeed been a noble one, blessing many lands and times; and its source in Jesus' words and spirit is purer and more refreshing than the springs of any river. But it, too, has been corrupted in its long course. This is indeed a natural result in all wide historic movements. However purely such a movement may begin, still, as it flows on, it gathers pollutions. A political party, for instance, starts with a little band of purest souls and loftiest principles, ready to suffer shame and death for the abolition of some slavery and the establishment of some right. But as the movement extends and becomes successful, it attracts self-seeking men who value a postmastership, or popularity, above principles. The widening current is used by politicians to drive the party "machine" or to turn their own mills; and, as it flows onward, it absorbs many a corruption and sewerage of all sorts.

A like result is inevitable in religious movements. As they grow popular and powerful, they lose their purity. Hence, even Christianity, though so clear

and healthful in its source, — as free and refreshing as a mountain spring, — has shown these changes of the stream. In its long course through the foothills and flats of history, it has lost its freshness. It has sometimes spread and stagnated through malarious marshes of ignorance and folly. It has here and there been stopped by some cunning dam, which has turned the "water of life" into a water-power. It has been used to run the machinery of some church, to grind out gain for some prince or pope, and to float the schemes of some party or priesthood. It has received the drainage of many a foul field, and sometimes has been infected with false and cruel teachings more fatal than any bacteria. In various ways, the Christian stream has lost its original purity and healthfulness, as really and quite as much as the Mississippi.

Here, too, similar remedies are proposed. Most people favor filtration. They say, "Let us revise the Confessions and Creeds, repudiate all the unjust acts of the Church, and strain out the corruptions as well as we can." Others wish to go behind all the corruptions, and take the water of life only from its pure source in the early Church. Still others would abandon the Christian stream altogether, and supply themselves from some other religion or theosophy or

philosophy, from ancient India or Egypt or other land remote in time and place; — just as many wish to get the city water from some distant lake.

Yet, all the while, the best truths taught in all those ancient religions and philosophies are still revealed in modern life and thought, fresh as the summer shower. Words and deeds of justice and mercy are daily dropping from thousands of lofty lives, like the blessed rain from heaven; and divine ideals of right are distilled from the best social atmosphere, like the morning dew from the air. The real religion of righteousness and love is ever flowing forth through human hearts and consciences, like springs from the hillsides. It flows as copiously in modern as in ancient life, and as purely in America as in India or Palestine; — just as the heavens fill the streams of Minnesota with quite as good water as the sacred Ganges or Jordan. Below these local and surface springs in daily experience, there also lies a deep and permanent supply of righteous principles, — like a subterranean reservoir of the water of life. It has been gathered from the experience of the ages, filtered by centuries of trial, and stored up in the deepest and best instincts of human nature. It is found under all religions, Christian, Hebrew, or heathen, substantially the same; just as God's good water is the same, whether drawn from

a Buddhist spring or from the sacred well of Jacob himself. The water of life underlies us all, and, like the deep supplies beneath many a city, needs only to be lifted to the surface.

Jesus, indeed, seems to have taught something like this, in that famous talk at Jacob's well with the woman of Samaria. She, like so many simple women and men then and ever since, thought religion was confined to a narrow name and people and place. But Jesus, in a few words which Renan calls the best ever uttered about religion, told her it was world-wide, and that "neither in this mountain [of sacred Samaria] nor yet at Jerusalem" was it any holier than elsewhere. For, he added, "the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth,"—or, as an old manuscript reads, "in the spirit of truth." Worship was as wide as the spirit of truth; and the water of life did not have to be sought in old and sacred places, but was welling up in every honest soul. Turning to that venerable well of Jacob, from which she was drawing, Jesus said, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again," but his only true and lasting supply "shall be in him, a well of water springing up unto eternal life." The water of life was not a thing to be borrowed and brought from any foreign or ancient

source, but must be found in the depths of man's own nature, "springing up within him."

"Springing up"! The water of life rises of itself; it does not have to be pumped. This is hardly, as yet, the prevalent opinion. A Church with unnatural doctrines and artificial observances, with elaborate services and sensational preaching, and other practices to frighten or excite men, sometimes suggests a pumping-system with laboring pistons to force piety to an unnatural height, and with cunning valves to keep it from backsliding. In his great poem, "The Cathedral," Lowell even specified

> "That drony vacuum of compulsory prayer,
> Still pumping phrases for the Ineffable,
> Though all the valves of memory gasp and wheeze."

How refreshing to turn from all such things to Jesus' representation of the water of life as needing no artificial lifting or liturgy, but "springing up" of itself, like a natural fountain, or like those artesian wells which are flowing in so many lands and even amid the sands of Sahara.

To obtain the largest flow may require the patient digging and drilling of deep thought, — a work which the Church sometimes decries as leaving the soul parched and perhaps to perish from the fires below.

But the work is often well rewarded. Frenchmen toiled for years at that famous well at Grenoble, — even spent a whole year in merely getting back the broken drill that had dropped to the bottom. They became discouraged and were about to stop, in despair of finding water. "Go on," said Arago; "go on, and you will get it." So they went on, until, one day, the water came spouting up through nearly two thousand feet, six hundred gallons a minute, and has been flowing for sixty years since, not only watering the town, but warming the hospital from the heat below. Often the drill of deeper thought, though at first piercing only dry rock, at length strikes the divine springs, and finds, instead of infernal fires, the saving water of life, not only refreshing the soul but warming the heart. As Lord Bacon wrote: "A little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion." And not only deep thinking, but deep feeling in some stirring experience, often opens these flowing wells of the water of life.

But they are oftenest found without deep searching, spontaneously flowing forth in daily experience, — like the millions of natural springs in all the valleys and among the hills. For Nature herself shows everywhere this process which Jesus took to illustrate re-

ligion. She shows it not only in her flowing fountains, but through all the fields and forests, in whose every tree and bush the water is of itself, all the summer, "springing up unto life." She shows it in all the showers and clouds and vapors, whose waters have risen miles above the tree-tops, "springing up" from the seas by the mere force of the natural sunshine. The same Power that works in sunshine and clouds and trees works in souls, too. As the seas beneath the sky, as the sap within the maples, so beneath and within every man lies a divine fountain which, if he will but keep the way open for it by an honest life and a receptive spirit, will become "in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life."

THE BOOK OF JONAH

THE BOOK OF JONAH

THE book of "Jonah" is one of the best in the Bible, but one of the most abused. Profane people ridicule it without reason, and even preachers pass by its merits and rarely give it rightful praise. Both regard it mainly as the story of a fish; and many treat this story as the last absurdity, so that jests about Jonah and the whale are among the stalest things in speech. Yet the fish is a mere and minor incident of the book, neither mentioned nor implied except in three short verses; and even these need no apology, as we shall see. The real purport of the work has nothing to do with the fish, but is its fine lesson of *forgiveness and charity*. The real subject is the impartial benevolence and fatherhood of God, calling for benevolence and brotherhood among men. In this teaching of charity the book of "Jonah" anticipates the best in the New Testament, and is a prophecy of Jesus.

Not that Jonah himself is benevolent; but the author of the book is, and teaches that God is and that men ought to be. Jonah himself is just the

opposite, — unforgiving, uncharitable, cruel; — and it is one of the curiosities of religion that he has been so widely honored. For this book hardly honors him at all, but evidently aims to portray him as false to goodness and to God. He enters it impiously disobeying Jehovah, and, when ordered by him to go to Nineveh, tries "to flee" in the opposite direction, to Joppa and thence by ship westward to Spain. He is even so poor a prophet as to think that he can thus sail beyond the realm and reach of God, and is twice described as trying to flee "from the presence of the Lord." But he is soon taught that "the presence of the Lord" covers the Mediterranean, too, — raising against the sinner "a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was likely to be broken." After his guilt is discovered by lot, he confesses and persuades the sailors to save the ship by casting him overboard. This is the only good thing told of him in the book; — and even this is not much to his credit, since he repeatedly shows a desire to get rid of his life, and twice implores Jehovah to take it. Jehovah, however, is merciful, and now saves and brings to shore even this poor wretch who has so disobeyed him.

Yet, after all this, Jonah is no better, but rather worse. He has indeed learned to obey Jehovah, and now goes to Nineveh; but he does it in the most

impious and ugly mood. He wants the destruction of that great city, with all its 120,000 infants; and the Lord's mercy in sparing it "displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry." He even reproaches the Lord for saving it, and for being "full of compassion and plenteous in mercy." He still hopes that Nineveh will be destroyed, and he goes out to sit in the suburbs and watch. He waits there in so petulant a spirit that, at the mere withering of the gourd-vine which the Lord had kindly raised to shade him, he again becomes enraged. And when Jehovah reasons with him about this, and asks if his rage is right, Jonah impudently replies that it is: "It is right that I should be angry, even unto death." With this curt contradiction of Jehovah, the prophet makes his exit from the story.

So little is Jonah honored in this book. He enters it in disobedience, he goes through it in irreverence, he leaves it in blasphemy. Unforgiving, unfeeling, caring for neither man nor God, he is enraged at the saving of the city, and insists against the Lord himself that he is right to be angry because his little gourd-vine has died and half a million men have not. Jonah's portrait is compounded of impiety and ugliness; and it is very evident that the author did not in the least honor him or want us to.

What the book honors is just the contrary. It represents the Lord as reproving this inhumanity, and proclaiming his own loving regard for these Ninevites and their infants, even for cattle. Most tenderly Jehovah speaks: "Should not I spare Nineveh, that great city wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern their right hand from their left, and much cattle!" In contrast with Jonah, the book shows the benevolence that is in God, and that ought to be in his prophets. It describes him as "full of compassion, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy." It represents him as forgiving even to a degree beyond human rulers, pardoning those whom he had already sentenced. "God repented of the evil which he had said that he would do unto them, and he did it not." So humane this God is that he revokes his own order, takes back his own words, almost humiliates himself, in order to save that heathen city which Jonah wants destroyed.

The book becomes still more significant when we see its *historic connection.* Scholars are now fairly agreed that it was written in the fifth century B. C., and in order to oppose the intolerance of the times. That intolerance came rather late in Hebrew history. The early Israelites had been fairly free from it; for, though later accounts represent them as fiercely exter-

minating the Canaanites, the Bible contains abundant evidence that they did no such thing, but intermingled and intermarried with them, even adopted much of their religion. For centuries, Israelites take the daughters of the heathen for wives, and the very gods of the heathen for worship. Even so late and revered a ruler as Solomon has many such wives, and builds altars in Jerusalem to at least four such gods, mentioned by name. For several generations after Solomon the practice continues among both people and princes.

But with the more definite development and organization of the religion of Jehovah, this hospitality to the heathen quite naturally diminished, and sometimes changed to hatred. The prophet Elijah is represented as slaying the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal; and later prophets have much to say against the pagan nations, — Moab and Assyria and others. With the conquest of Northern Israel by Assyria, the hatred of that nation naturally increased, and many a prophecy and curse was uttered against its great capital, Nineveh. Efforts also increased against the heathen worship in Jerusalem. At length, about 622 B. C., the reforming Jewish king Josiah tried to abolish it there; and the Bible tells how extensively he slew its priests and destroyed its altars, — among them, those which Sol-

omon had built. In connection with this reform of Josiah was written the book of Deuteronomy, which even orders each Israelite to slay his own wife and children and brother, if they tempt him to heathen worship. "Neither shalt thine eye pity, neither shalt thou spare; thou shalt surely kill him; thou shalt stone him with stones that he die."

During the Babylonian captivity, which began shortly after, animosities to the heathen worship naturally grew; and when, about 458 B. C., the famous Ezra led a band of the exiles back to Jerusalem, he made further efforts to end it there. Among them, he particularly opposed those intermarriages with the heathen. He tells how, at hearing of them: "I rent my garment and plucked off the hair of my head; and said, Our iniquities are increased, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens." Ezra even organized a divorce-court at Jerusalem, which forced the Jews to put away not only their heathen wives, but "such as are born of them"; — and there is no hint that any alimony was allowed. The Bible gives the names of one hundred and twelve men who thus cruelly turned off their wives, merely for not being Jews, and in order that "the fierce wrath of our God for this matter be turned from us." So severe had now become that hatred of the heathen.

But there was of course much friendly feeling for them; — and it inspired at least two of the books of the Bible. One of these is the beautiful little story of "Ruth," which is now regarded as written in Ezra's time and in order to justify these marriages with heathen women. For its heroine, Ruth, is a heathen, and is even one of those "Moabites" whom Ezra denounced. Yet the book not only is the story of her happy marriage with an Israelite, but makes her become thereby the ancestress of the glorious King David. Deuteronomy had ordered that no Moabite family could enter the congregation of Israel in ten generations; but this one rose to the very throne of Israel in four generations. Ezra declared that intermarriage with the heathen had brought upon Israel "the fierce wrath of our God"; but in this book of "Ruth," that same intermarriage brought the sacred David himself and the whole royal line of Judah for four hundred years.

The other and more important book in defense of the heathen is this of "Jonah," supposed to have been written about the same time. It took for its subject one of those former Hebrew prophets who had so often denounced the heathen and Nineveh; and we have seen what an unfavorable portrait it gave him. But notice, on the other hand, how favorably it por-

trayed the heathen. It showed these sailors, though they were idolaters and "cried every man to his god," yet most merciful and doing their best to save Jonah. Though the sea "wrought and was tempestuous against them," and though they had found that throwing him overboard would stop the storm, "nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring the ship to land, but they could not." These heathen were ready to risk their lives for another, and were almost as anxious to save that one Israelite as he was to have the whole city of Nineveh destroyed. In the same spirit, the book shows these heathen Ninevites as doing the best they knew. It tells how they repented and "turned from their evil way," and how they humbled themselves, from the least among them up to the great king who left his throne and laid aside his royal robe and put on sackcloth and "sat in ashes." So does the author contrast the good heathen with this Hebrew prophet watching them from his booth, wanting to see them all perish, and angry at the Lord for not destroying them.

The book also gave a benevolent solution of an old problem which had much perplexed Israel; — namely, why the destruction of Nineveh did not come when Jehovah had so plainly and repeatedly proclaimed it? This work answers that it was because of the very

goodness of Jehovah, which made him change his sentence. He was so "full of compassion and plenteous in mercy," so much kinder than men, that he "repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them," reversed his own orders, and saved the sentenced city. Thus even what seemed to others a failure and falsehood in God was made by this author to show his goodness instead.

So did this book, five hundred years before the New Testament, rebuke intolerance and teach the broad religion which sees the heathen also as God's people and all mankind as one. It was the same lesson which Jesus afterward taught in his parable of the Jewish priest and Levite, full of religious zeal, but both passing by the wounded man, while the good heathen Samaritan stopped and helped him. It was the same lesson which Jesus taught in his parable of the prodigal son, with its rebuke of Judaism as that older brother who, like Jonah, was sullen at the good father's kindness, and "was angry" when the other brother was forgiven. It was the same lesson which Paul taught when he turned from Judaism to the gentile world, ridiculed old formalities as "weak and beggarly rudiments," and declared love "the fulfilling of the Law" and the essence of religion. Even more humane than Paul's God was this one who "repented," and

who so loved the world that he gave up his own plans, and took back his own prophecies, in order to save a heathen city. So long before Christianity did this work protest against intolerance, and preach the universal fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. In view of its broad charity and divine lesson of forgiveness, no wise reader will find any fault with its little story of the fish.

Is, indeed, that story any blemish on the book? Even if the author intended that fish for a fact, we can well excuse him. But why suppose he meant it as a fact, any more than Jesus meant the parable of the prodigal son for one? Jesus' parable is conceded to be a fiction, told to teach a religious lesson. Why not suppose that the book of "Jonah" is another?

But are we sure that the original book even contained that story of the fish? Only those three little verses mention it; — and that psalm which Jonah is said to have spoken "in the belly of the fish" quite contradicts it. For that long psalm does not contain the slightest hint of any such situation, or of any fish at all, but is simply a general thanksgiving for escape from drowning, and several times speaks of the escape as already past. It represents the danger as entirely over, the author safe ashore; — and whatever poems may have been composed within a fish, this certainly

was not one of them. The poem is in fact widely regarded as not belonging to the original book at all, but as a later addition; and the connected words about the fish may easily have been another, — a mere "*deus ex machina*" to bring Jonah to land.

For such a method of escape has been very frequent in story, the world around; — from the old Hindu tale of Saktideva swallowed by a fish and cut out again unharmed, to the Nova Scotia myth of the hero carried to the sunset-land in a whale. Even our Hiawatha was swallowed, canoe and all, by a fish, and brought safely to shore; as Longfellow told at considerable length, without being blamed for it in the least. So "in many lands and ages," says the learned E. B. Tylor, we find "legends of a hero or maiden devoured by a monster and hacked out or disgorged again." So common has been the story, among peoples who have never heard of the Hebrews or of each other, that it is often interpreted as a Nature-myth of sunset and sunrise. We need not follow our imaginative solar mythologists, to whom, one says, "all things are possible"; but certainly the story was so common in antiquity that this author could very naturally adopt it. Indeed, right there at Joppa, where Jonah embarked, was often located the scene of the monster seeking to swallow Andromeda; and ancient

writers, from Strabo and Pliny to Josephus, told how the marks of the event were still shown there. And not far away a Phenician myth told how Hercules was not only swallowed by a fish, but, like Jonah, survived three days in his stomach; — a myth which Rosenmüller and many critics have regarded as the real origin of the story in the Bible.

Not only that story, but probably the whole book of Jonah, was intended as a mere fiction to teach a religious lesson, — and was no more meant as literal history than was Jesus' parable of the good Samaritan. The author doubtless knew that great Nineveh, with its many and venerable gods, never was converted and "proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth" for fear of the God of little Israel. He doubtless knew that the haughty monarch in that great palace, where he was feared and adored as half divine, never humbled himself and "sat in ashes" at the preaching of a poor Jew with nothing but a gourd-vine to cover him; — but would have been much more likely to order such a missionary sunk in the Tigris. But these fictions of the book do not at all affect its religious value. It teaches that divine lesson of forgiveness and love so well that no historical errors can harm it, no legendary fancies lower it in the least.

The harm came when the legend was exalted at the

expense of the lesson. For that divine truth of forgiveness was soon forgotten, and the book came to be remembered chiefly for the fish. That story fixed itself in popular thought, and raised Jonah into new prominence and false position. He came to be regarded as quite a saint, and among the early Christians that story of the fish was even taken as typical of Jesus.

It is commonly supposed that Jesus himself taught this; but a careful study of the gospels leads to the conclusion that he did not. The book of Matthew does indeed make Jesus refer to the sign of Jonah surviving in the fish. But in Luke's report of the same event, Jesus makes no reference to the fish, but only to the very different scene of Jonah preaching to the Ninevites. And Mark, reporting the same conversation, makes Jesus say nothing of any sign of Jonah, but to declare explicitly that they shall have no sign at all. Both Mark and Luke agree that Jesus said nothing about the fish; and Mark teaches that he said nothing even about Jonah. By the usual canons of criticism, Mark's simpler report is to be preferred. If so, then Jesus refused to appeal to signs in Jonah or anywhere else, but trusted more divinely to the mere truth of what he said and did, and was content to leave it without any of the miracles

which less worthy teachers have used to prop their poorer work. How much more honorable to him to see it so, and not to connect the divine truths he taught with that fable of the fish! How it dishonors Jesus to say he was typified in any way by that ugly preacher, who begins the story disobeying God and ends it blaspheming him, — who is eager for the destruction of a great city and angry at the Lord for saving it. Jesus was typified, not by the narrow Jonah, but by the noble book which rebuked him and taught Christian charity so many centuries before Christ.

For Jesus was true to the spirit of that book. He again taught its lesson of a brotherhood reaching beyond any race or religion. He gave his blessings not to the followers of the Jewish or of any special faith, but to peacemakers and pure in heart, the meek and merciful, wherever they might belong. And like the Jehovah of this good book, Jesus carried forgiveness to the extreme; — forgave adulteress and thief, was so forgiving that Renan says he had a "divine incapacity for seeing evil," taught to forgive seven times and seventy times seven, to love even enemies, to turn the cheek when smitten and give more when stolen from; and in the same spirit he closed his life by asking forgiveness for his own mur-

derers. Jesus was indeed a son and incarnation of that God of extreme forgiveness and love, — and taught that every one should be.

Too often the Church has forsaken him and followed the intolerant Jonah instead. Tolstoi says that when a Jewish Rabbi asked him if Christians do turn the cheek when smitten, he had nothing to reply, for just then Christians were smiting the Jews on both cheeks. Smiting has indeed been made quite a virtue in Christendom. Jesus' "Blessed are the peacemakers" has been drowned in the roar of cannon; and, instead of loving its enemies, the Church for centuries made a business of butchering and sometimes of burning them. It now and then responded to its Master's "Blessed are the merciful," by the shrieks of women tortured on the rack, and taught for a thousand years that most of mankind would be tortured far worse and forever after death.

Such days and doctrines are now past, and Christendom is getting nearer to the spirit of Jesus. There is still indeed a wide-spread opinion that his beatitudes need some amendment; that the pure in heart shall not see God unless they have also the proper theology in their head, and that the merciful shall not obtain mercy unless they bear the Christian name. But men are learning that it is not theories about Jesus, but the

spirit of Jesus, that makes true Christians; and that, if they have that spirit, is makes no difference whether they bear his name or not. Indeed, Jesus himself was far too noble to care for his name; and, according to the record, even rebuked those who should trust to that, and who should claim that they had "prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done" so many things. He said, not calling him Lord, Lord, but doing the will of the Father, brought them into the kingdom. Jesus taught a religion of principles instead of names, and those who are true to him will not make it any narrower. They will proclaim that uprightness is righteous, whatever church it comes in; that goodness is good and godlike, whatever creed it grows with; that in every land on earth, and under every faith in history, — Christian, heretic, or heathen, — peacemakers are sons of God, forgiveness is divine, and love is itself religion.

Why should doctrinal differences make men foes? The girl in the story worried her brother and herself about his doctrinal opinions until he lost patience and said, "Oh, hang your theology, let us be brother and sister!" And would it not be better if the quarreling religions of the world would hang up their theologies for a season, and learn to be more brotherly and sisterly? For love is better than any catechism; —

or, rather, teaches the best. A Baptist clergyman, when asked how his daughter came to marry a Catholic, replied that Cupid had never studied theology. But it would be truer to say that he has studied it better than any of the doctors of divinity. Love learns it best, at any rate; and the apostle well says, "Every one that loveth is begotten of God and knoweth God."

Jesus was wise in his emphasis of love, and our best men imitate him. Said Longfellow, —

> ". . . I am in love with love,
> And the sole thing I hate is hate;
> For hate is the unpardonable sin,
> And Love the Holy Ghost within."

Longfellow was as good as his word, and never harbored a bitter feeling. When Poe was abusing him, he was giving lectures in praise of the other's poetry; and when it was proposed to make him a visitor of Harvard College, the president of the committee said, "What would be the use? Longfellow could never be brought to find fault with anybody or anything." His biographer says that this was true, and that Longfellow's whole life was bathed in that sympathy and love "which suffers long and envies not, which forgives seventy times seven, and as many more times if need be."

And is not this spirit a practical power in the world? Call to mind the story of Henry Ward Beecher's lecture in Richmond after the war. There, in the large audience, sat Fitzhugh Lee, several other Southern generals, and many indignant people, curious to hear the great abolitionist orator, but ready to hiss him. Calmly looking over the audience, Mr. Beecher at length said, "Is this General Lee?" The general bowed, silently and icily. "Then," said Mr. Beecher, "I want to offer you this right hand, which in its own way fought against you and yours, but which I would now willingly sacrifice to make the South prosperous and happy. Will you take it, general?" Amid the hushed surprise of the audience, General Lee arose, stepped forward, and stretched his arm across the footlights; and as their hands clasped, there arose from that changed assembly such applause as the old hall had never before heard. This abolitionist leader, who had done about as much as any man in the country to bring on the war that devastated Virginia, rode through Richmond next day amid the cheers of men who, but a few hours before, were almost ready to mob him.

Cannot this principle of brotherhood and love be carried further in public life, and be trusted more than it has ever been? Was Jesus such a visionary in this

matter as the world and even the Church has supposed? He was correct in it; and the Sermon on the Mount, however foolish it may seem to the standards of the street and of the Church, is a prophecy of the perfect State. Its principles will yet be the law of society and of business. Poor Sissy Jupe, when asked the first principle of political economy, forgot her lesson and stammered out in her confusion that it was to "do unto others as you would have others do unto you." But she was right; — and the political economy of the Golden Rule is the only one that will make society safe. It works more wonders than force, even among the worst classes. Cruel punishments have increased crime, while gentler methods have diminished it; and doubtless the time will come when society will treat adulteresses, thieves, and the worst criminals more as Jesus treated them. Men are to be moved, and society reformed, through the heart; and nothing touches and warms the heart like forgiveness and love. Jesus was right in making so much of them, and the world will come to it yet.

Too long the ship of State has carried the unforgiving and intolerant spirit of Jonah, — stirring up storms worse than in the story. Let it, like him, be cast overboard, — with the prayer that no monster may interfere to save it. Then the old miracle will be re-

peated, — the waves will grow calmer, society safer, and religion surer. Through the natural laws of the world and the natural love of the heart, we shall feel a higher Love infolding us, and find a God who does not repent nor need to, but who is forever "full of compassion, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy."

THE BREATH OF LIFE

THE BREATH OF LIFE

"WITHOUT a parable spake he not unto them," and modern preachers might use this method more. Not only do fields, lilies, leaven, still remain as texts, but science has unfolded them further and found many others. Physical science, however, does not exhaust their meaning, but, as Wasson suggested, only parses Nature, — shows the mere syntax of the sentence, while leaving it still to be read. Nature's meaning has even grown more religious with advancing knowledge. Astronomy has shown new harmony in the hymn which "the morning stars sang together"; and its heavens, hung with suns and systems, declare a far greater creation than ancient psalmists saw. The earth also has everywhere shown new marvels, and revealed a rule more divine with order. It has shown, not only the immeasurable age, but the immense advance of life, — from Archæan algæ to our forests, from Silurian sponges to human society. As we read in the rocks this long record of progress, geology seems theology, proving a providence eons before Adam.

The same divine work continues, and issues new Scriptures every year. The seasons themselves, with all events recurring so orderly, are revelations of "the Law." Winter even sends stone tables of it, in the polished slabs of every pond and the plates of each frost-crystal, graven with unerring lines and angles by the same hand that carved the tablets on Sinai. Even "Psalms" of beauty are sung by the winter storms, which so quickly create their delicate snow-stars more wondrous than the constellations, or blossom in dainty florets fairer than a lily, to fall by the billion and blanket and bless the earth. But spring writes a still richer revelation. Its foliage, diviner than old folios, not only drapes the earth in beauty, but purifies the air, and out of poison creates both breath and food for man and beast. To the thoughtful soul, every tree of the forest is a New Testament, with its leaves all proclaiming the divine care. Each flower of the field illuminates a manuscript of God. Nor does autumn end the revelation, but brings a better, declaring the endurance of life; — for each falling leaf uncovers a bud, to stand bare through the blasts of winter, and yet to spring into a new branch. Each withering flower tells of more wondrous seeds, which can forsake their stem, be borne far and buried long, lie dried on a rock or drowned in a river, be

baked by summer heats or bear intensest cold, — and still grow into new flowers and fruit. Life seems safe enough. It sleeps all winter, with the ice for its pillow, and with blizzards for its lullaby; but at the touch of the spring sun it awakes refreshed, and, singing, "O grave, where is thy victory?" goes out to work the miracles of another year.

So full of suggestions is Nature. Parables enough are offered on every hand. As Emerson said, "What is a farm but a mute gospel?"

Leaving, however, these cheering phenomena of life and growth, may we not find lessons also in Nature's forbidding aspects of decay? I venture to choose one of her destructive processes, and to take up the parable of the *Breath*. "Destructive," — for breathing is a genuine burning. It consumes fuel in us as fire does in our stoves. It takes the same oxygen from the air, combines it with the same elements, evolves the same heat, and gives off the same products in breath as in smoke. Respiration is a real fire. Still, may we not find under even this destructive process some beneficent spiritual law?

We ought to, for it is also a most vital process. "Breath of life," the Bible calls it; — and life seems more closely connected with breath than with any-

thing else. Real life on earth begins with breathing, ever depends on it, and ever advances with its increase. The lesson of respiration seems to be that destruction does not kill, that consuming does not destroy, that burning even brings life.

But respiration is not limited to animals. It begins in a lower, and rises into a much higher field. We will try to trace this burning breath through its successive stages, and to show that everywhere it burns to bless, and is indeed a "breath of life."

First, we notice it in the *vegetable* world. For even plants, besides taking food for growth, take true breath to burn out their growth. We are wont to speak of Moses' burning bush as a miracle unique in history. But botanists say that every bush on earth is burning. Through its every living cell that fiery oxygen works all summer. Even the autumn colors are associated with heat. Whittier put good science into his poem when he called "yon maple wood the burning bush." In certain processes the breath and fire become active enough to show their heat. Such is the case in sprouting seeds. Such is the case in flowers. Often a single blossom produces heat enough for the thermometer to show, while dense clusters of them in the Aroideæ sometimes raise the temperature five, ten, fifteen degrees, Sachs says. In

the sight of chemistry, flowers are all fires; and one great genus is well named phlox, — flame. There was fact enough in Hafiz' fancy that roses were the flames of a burning bush; and botany adds that every blooming plant is another, whether blazing in the cardinal-flower or only smoking in the gray grass-blossoms.

But, just as in that bush of old story, this burning does not harm. Rather, it is so helpful that the plant dies without it, as surely as a man dies without air. Not only does it thus save life, but creates more. Out of that burning seed it brings a new plant. It brings new energies, too. In each cell the fire creates force, just as in the boiler of a boat. As a result, the cilia of some algæ lash the water like oars, the diatom moves across the field of the microscope like a propeller across the lake, and the beautiful volvox goes rolling through the water like the wheel of a steamer. And out of that warmer fire in the flower how many new creations come! One is beauty. The leaves are refined to softer petals, grow radiant with gold and purple, — and proclaim to us the spiritual law that the highest beauty is reached only through the burning out of our substance. The same process brings sweetness, too, turns starch to sugar, and loads the flower with honey and perfume. It even brings something like love; and the blossom becomes a real marriage-

bower, where parents join in genuine wedding and give themselves for each other and their offspring. So the flower is consumed only to rise again from its ashes, and to extend its life to distant lands and ages.

Verily, in this familiar blossom burning to bring new life, is not the old miracle still done and outdone? The reverent soul hears the God, who called to Moses from the bush, still calling from every calyx, declaring that, though he be named a "consuming fire," yet to deeper insight his fire does not consume, but works through the vegetable world as very "breath of life."

But we see this law clearer in its second revelation in the *animal* world. Here breath is more active, and grows ever more so through the rising animal scale. And this deeper breathing always means faster burning. Analysis shows, for instance, that the breath of an average healthy man consumes carbon at the rate of one hundred and seventy pounds a year, — literally burns up within him every month the substance of over a bushel of charcoal. With this increasing fire comes increasing warmth. The gilled fish hardly shows it; — he cannot get much fire started there in the water. Even air-breathing reptiles, with their poor lungs, get so little draft that they only smolder,

and we call them cold-blooded. But with better bronchial flues and more active breast-bellows the fire burns freer and the blood grows warmer, until it reaches the high temperature of mammals, and still higher of some birds. The animal world, also, is all burning bush.

Here, too, the fire does not consume. It does, indeed, waste our substance, so that the animal, unlike the tree, soon gets his growth. Some poor-lunged creatures are said to lengthen as long as they live, like an elm; but better breathers burn up their accumulations, and men and birds keep but little body. Nor do they keep even that; but it is continually consumed, — several times during our lives, the doctors say, — muscles, nerves, lungs, heart, brains, bones, and all. But this consumption is always restored, and does not harm us in the least. Rather, it is just the thing that keeps us alive. If we were not thus perpetually destroyed, we should get sick, and die; and the only way we can keep alive and well is by being annihilated every few years. Curiously, too, this destructive process is just the one which cannot be suspended at all. Other functions may be stopped for a season, even the nutritive ones. A man can go even without food, for a week, — for forty days, some say, — but not without breath for five minutes. Eating seems to

be of quite secondary account in life. The really important thing is burning up. When the fire goes out, we die; but so long as it is consuming us, we thrive. Such is the paradox and first principle of this mysterious thing called life. Burning saves and increases it.

Increases all its energies, too. The faster this breath burns, the greater the activity. The tree has roots for holding still, and can hardly be moved without dying. But, with better breath, roots go out of fashion, and there come fins and feet for roving and wings for rising; and the more the breath, the more the motion. In contrast with forests fixed by the river come fish swimming in it, and amphibians lifting themselves out of it, and better breathing quadrupeds crossing the country; while the burning bird soars above the forests, flies over lakes and mountains, makes the tour of the State on a summer morning, and, when winter comes, goes to Florida like a gentleman. Such a breath of life is this fire in the animal world.

But this breath rises to a third stage in *human arts*. For man breathes more largely than with lungs; and, learning how to burn that carbon anywhere, he adds to Nature's slow fire within him a much faster one without. He heats his hut and home; and, instead

of having to migrate like an animal, he brings Florida to his own fireside, and makes the tropics anywhere to order. Learning how to make this artificial breathing faster, and fire fiercer, he gains new forces that far outdo those of animals. Instead of crawling through the country, like the quadruped, he makes this fire carry him and all his family and furniture farther and faster. Instead of flying fifty miles for his breakfast, like a bird, he sits still like a lord and orders it, — beefsteak from Texas, rolls from Dakota, an orange from California, and coffee from Asia. By this breath under a boiler, he gets them brought so easily that Mr. Atkinson says a good mechanic in Massachusetts can get his whole year's meat and flour fetched from beyond the Mississippi for one day's work. Sir Lyon Playfair said that a ton of freight can be carried on water two miles by a cubic inch of coal.

Nor does man stop with moving Nature's products, but makes better, by this same principle. In his manufactures and varied arts, he learns to consume not merely a little in the form of food, like an animal, but enormously in other forms; — not only acorns, but oaks; not only fruits, but whole forests; not only a few acres, but long ages of them condensed in coal; and not only coal, but ores and rocks and the original elements themselves. Human art becomes

a boundless burning, destroying about everything on earth.

Yet this burning, too, only helps. It turns the forests into force, and the whole carboniferous era into energy, — turns ores and everything into something better. It consumes only to create. Indeed, strictly speaking, it does not consume at all. Not an atom of carbon or anything else has ever been destroyed. Burning only sets it free from old forms to enter into life again; and Nature is always waiting to start it into life, — is all the summer turning our smoke and ashes back into new trees and corn. Food does not fail, but is growing more abundant and cheaper every year; and many farmers are praying for a famine or war or something that will reduce the supply. Fuel does not fail. Professors predict that long before the coal gives out, they will be able to get heat cheaper out of something else, or get it for nothing out of sunbeams. Nothing fails; — rather, the consumptions are all restored and more, and the necessaries and luxuries are yearly more abundant. Corn, clothes, goods of every kind, more and more glut the market and beg to be bought. The great social problem which troubles us to-day is not, as once, how to produce, but how to get the too abundant products distributed; — not, as once, how to supply the world's table, but how

to pass the supplies that threaten to break the table down. Production is easy enough, and some say that overproduction is what ails us. The whole world, of both Nature and art, is as good as the widow's cruse and barrel; — even better, for use only makes it grow fuller and overflow. Loaves and fishes and everything else are forever multiplied; and the fragments of the feast are apt to be more than the first supply.

Destroying things seems somehow to increase them. Even the wasteful destruction of a conflagration seems to be a sort of creative process. What does a fire in our streets mean? Its deepest meaning is that a better building will go up there. Chicago burns down into higher blocks and more beauty and business. The flames kindle also new energies in the men who were burned out, and new currents of sympathy, that run round the world and rouse the sentiment of brotherhood in distant nations. Mourn as we may, conflagrations still add new streets to our cities and new strength to our citizens and new virtues to our souls. In view of these results, one is tempted to ask, Where is the fire out of which is not born more than was burned? So of other great material losses: they often prove productive, arouse men, and add to the wealth of the country. Consumption seems somehow to be creative, even when it gets the

start of us and runs wild in some great calamity. At any rate, when kept in control and made regular, — as in respiration, — this consumption, whether by fire or other force, works through the world of industry and material civilization, as the very "breath of life."

But above these material fields we trace the same principle through a fourth phase, in *spiritual life*. Thought is a breathing, ever inhaling fresh truth, which consumes old ideas in society, just as oxygen does old cells in the body. Indeed, those arts we have just noticed have all come from this mental breathing. How many established opinions had to be consumed to bring ease of travel! Once, even science argued that no steamer could ever cross the Atlantic; and there was a time when everybody knew that steam could not carry anything on land. The first modern who suggested such a thing is said to have been shut up in the Bicêtre for it, as a lunatic. Afterward, the Englishman who first advocated passenger railways was called by the *Quarterly Review* "beneath our contempt," while the wise old *Edinburgh Review* said, "Put him in a strait-jacket." Prudent men predicted that railways would ruin the country and kill the people; — yet would not do even that, for nobody would use them, and they never would succeed. One

Liverpool gentleman was so certain of this that he said, if trains ever reached a speed of ten miles an hour, he would eat a stewed engine-wheel for breakfast. Even in Massachusetts the Boston *Courier* once called a proposed horse railroad to Albany a "project which everybody who knows the simplest rules of arithmetic knows to be impracticable," and which, "if practicable, every person of common sense knows would be as useless as a railroad from Boston to the moon." So many and so firmly established ideas have been consumed in a century in this mere matter of travel. And this is only an illustration of the consumption of old theories that has been going on through the arts and sciences and philosophies in all fields. See it in politics. Half of legislation is repeal, — Buckle said the best half. So, through all fields, this spiritual breath of thought and feeling has been burning fast.

Yet here, too, it has consumed only to create, and been in still higher degree the "breath of life." It has aided all those arts and sciences. It has advanced society, too, — just as breathing has advanced the animal kingdom, — and has brought to mankind a progress about as great as from mollusks to mammals. It has burned out social wrongs only to bring right. Even when the destruction has come by the conflagra-

tion of revolution, as in France, it has still blessed. See Taine's picture of society there, in the eighteenth century, with a king wasting thirty-six millions on only one of his mistresses; with the people starving to death by thousands, and yet having to pay four-fifths of their income in taxes to support the luxuries and vices of the nobles. The French Revolution, with all our just blame of it, still removed far more wrongs than the Reign of Terror wrought, and brought to the people a prosperity they never had before. Far better is it, of course, when the political body does not allow effete evils to accumulate so that it gets diseased and goes off in the spontaneous combustion of revolution, — but clears them out as fast as outgrown, by the regular breathing of reform, as in England. But, whether slow or swift, the destruction has generally blessed, and kept mankind advancing. What an advance history shows, from cannibal savages to modern society feeding its hungry and founding hospitals and charities of a hundred kinds! What an advance even since our pious ancestors of last century, when, Parton says, the best Christian in New England saw nothing wrong in buying Negroes for rum, and selling them for West India molassess to make rum to buy more! What a progress from the days when David could slay a man to steal his wife, and still be

revered as the most sacred psalmist; and when Solomon, with a whole regiment of wives, could be called the wisest of men, and be thought worthy to make the longest prayer in the Bible!

For *religion*, too, has felt the effects of this spiritual breathing, and has been advancing by it. Here, too, ancient ideas have been burning out to bring better. Samuel's Jehovah, ordering innocent men slain like mice, gave way to Isaiah's God of justice and to Jesus' God of love. The Church did, indeed, in its unbreathing centuries, fall far away from Jesus' lofty religion, and taught that God would torture heretics hereafter and wanted Christians to begin it here. But these barbarities have again been consumed, and have given way to a more reverent faith. The burning has always seemed bad, and always proved good. Even the great conflagrations in religion have helped it. The so censured skeptics of the eighteenth century abolished much bigotry; — and even one of the most honored Oxford professors has declared that "Voltaire had done more good than all the Fathers of the Church put together."

Modern thought, with all its destructiveness, has only been enlarging religion. It has swept away the little firmament and the creative week, only to find a creation eternal and infinite, and filled with an order

diviner than Bibles ever told. It has swept away certain supposed miracles of broken law, but only to show all the world a better miracle of laws unbroken. It has swept away the old theory of a petty Providence deranging earth and heaven to help a few men, — but only to show an infinite and truer Providence helping all by principles that can be depended on. Instead of fig-trees blasted, and Jordan ceasing, and Red Sea standing, and sun stopping, and gravitation going to wreck, — as if God were gone and his government a sham, — we find sun and seas and streams and trees and all things forever true, as if God were always here and to be trusted. Old ideas of Deity have indeed been destroyed, but only to show the universe pervaded by a Power more godlike than the God of theology ever was, more mighty, just, and merciful.

Religion all remains, and broadened as never before. Its old boundaries are getting wiped out, but only to show religion reaching beyond them without bound. We are learning to see Holy Land not in Judea alone, but wherever men have worshiped. We are learning to hear divinely inspired words, not merely from a few ancient prophets, but in every human utterance for justice. We are beginning to find a holy family, not in Nazareth alone, but in every home consecrated by love. We are beginning to admit a miraculous birth,

not merely from Mary, but from every mother on earth, with a mystery which all our science still leaves as deep as that of the hypostatic union. We are beginning to see a real Son of God, not in Jesus alone, but in every peacemaker, as Jesus said; and to see God dwelling in every one that loveth another, as the apostle declared. We are beginning to believe in a real Deity, — not a partial and poor one visiting earth in a few times and spots, to make his saints despise all who differed from them; but an infinite and eternal One, enfolding and filling all things, ruling in all laws, living in all life, loving in all love, and to be seen best and served best by love.

So much higher and holier and humaner thought has come with the destruction of old doctrines. This spiritual breathing has advanced religion as much as literal breathing has advanced animal life; — clearing it of its old reptilian habits, warming it to more than mammalian tenderness, and lifting it like a bird to sing a sacreder psalm of love and trust. Here, too, the burning has been a very "breath of life"; and religion ought to have learned ere this to breathe fearlessly, and let its old forms be consumed as fast as they will.

But the Church has sometimes forgotten this, and has gone to the unbreathing vegetable world for its

religious symbols. The preacher has often called the Church a vineyard, and exhorted his vines to guard above all things the roots and leaves by which they live and grow. Excellent advice, — so far as religion is a vineyard, — and we ought to learn all that we can from the vegetable world. Roots are indispensable, and I protest against the radicalism that would outroot any good thing. The ignorant servant, when asked if he had trimmed the orchard as ordered, said he had cut the trees all down, and was going to begin to trim them next day; and some who set themselves up for reformers try to trim the tree of life in about the same way. Roots teach us to value and venerate the past, and to keep our vital connection with it. Leaves teach religion the value of forms. To sweep away religious customs and doctrines which men sincerely believe, and by which they live, is as ruinous as to strip an orchard of its June foliage.

But these conservative lessons have their limits, and even the vegetable world tells us so. Even that so necessary foliage teaches us to change religious forms now and then. The trees these autumn days are shedding their leaves quite freely, — and seem to tell the preacher to let old beliefs drop as fast as they die, and not to spend too much of his precious time trying to glue them on. Indeed, their falling is the

very sign of life. The live tree lets them go. When your bare orchard shows a branch keeping them on in January, what does it mean? The leaves clinging there tell you that the branch is dead. The dried forms rustling on some branches of the religious tree often seem to be saying something like that. Life would cast them off, and without waiting for new ones. That timid maxim — not to let anything go until you have something better to put in its place — is mocked by all the trees, which let their whole liturgy go without the hope of getting another till May. These October maples and mountain-sides, blazing in a bonfire which goes out to leave them bare till spring brings better, tell religion to drop, as fast as they are outgrown, even the forms that have served it best, and to trust the good Providence which made them, and which will make more when needed. Even the vineyard teaches this.

But religion is higher than a vineyard, and should find its best symbols in that higher life which burns itself out, not in October alone, but in every breath, and which lives by so doing. Not leaves, but lungs, bring the advanced physical life; and not the leaves of Bibles or of any books, but the breathing of our own thought and love, brings the real spiritual life. For spirit, in a score of languages, is well named from

breath; and inspiration, in both etymology and true theology, means *breathing in*, ever freshly, from the infinite atmosphere of God that infolds us.

Religion ought to beware, and not let its lungs get diseased. For confinement in close walls, where ventilation is feared like vice, and where even the truth, by being breathed over and over again, soon loses its vitality, has the usual result, — develops consumption. It locks the religious lungs in spiritual tuberculosis; — although, as is usual with consumptives, the invalid is sure that nothing ails her, mistakes paleness for piety, and the hectic flush of a revival for religious health. In such cases, the medical advice is: — "Ventilate your abode or, better yet, move out of it, change your climate, try some other creed; and, best of all, live out under the open sky, rough it, start your lungs again, and breathe God's living air as you were created to do."

It seems hard to give up doctrines that have cost us much. Some saints are like the asthmatic patient who said he had worked so hard to get that breath in that he did not mean to let it go again. But life consists in letting it go and getting another, and so on forever, without any fear of the consequences. The fear that a new thought may injure religion is like the fear that a new breath may injure our tissue. Wisdom

says, "You had better take it, and leave the care of the tissue to the Providence that always sees to its repair." All that is really alive and worth living, in our beliefs and bodies alike, will not be harmed. Only the effete and hurtful will be burned out, and they will bring new warmth and life in the process, and will be replaced by better.

Let religion, then, breathe away, and continue to enlarge its lungs and elevate its life. And when, in its rising life, the roots of the vineyard are succeeded by feet that carry faith somewhat beyond the old theological trellis, — or even by wings that lift it high enough to overlook the Christian fence and see that other fields are filled and flooded with the same light and life of God, — let the sight be welcome and be sung with new joy. Religion ought to be like Shelley's lark, that through the deep blue

> "Wingeth,
> And singing still doth soar, and soaring ever singeth";

or like that other poet's bird, whose voice

> "Came quickening all the springs of trust and love,
> Dropping its fairy flute-notes from above, —
> Fresh message from the Beauty Infinite
> That wraps the world around, and fills it with delight."

Breath brings its best lessons to private life. It rebukes greed, and bids us burn out our gains gen-

erously. Gain is good, but must be followed by giving, as eating by breathing, if we would rise above vegetables. Indeed, our gains have to be given away, to get the good of them. Miserliness is very near to misery, as even etymology teaches. The wise preacher advocated foreign missionary contributions, — since, he said, if they were of no help to the heathen, they greatly helped the Christian contributors at home. Giving does enrich the giver, whether it enriches any one else or not. Beneficence is the bank that pays the best interest on deposits, and it pays back in better coin than was put in. Our proverbs have well declared that the best way to keep what we get is by giving it away in some good cause.

This truth of external possessions is still truer of ourselves. They, too, must be given away, in order to be kept, or even to be found at first. "The life of life is when for another we're living," says a poet; and another tells of one to whom love was the first waking, —"The past was a sleep, and her life began." Love, whether of a person or a cause, is indeed the highest form of the breath of life. It consumes as nothing else can, wastes with self-sacrifice and sorrows, yet only to lift to larger life, to bless with new powers and higher happiness. Selfishness is as fatal to the soul as holding the breath is to the body. Burning our-

selves out in sacrifice for something is the only way to keep the heart warm and the soul alive. This saving of our selves by consuming them is the deepest lesson of the breath. This is the central lesson in Jesus' religion also, and is summed in his saying, "Whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it."

And does not breathing give hint that life shall be preserved? Why assume that death ends us, when it is the essence of every breath and the very thing that keeps us from ending? What if body must be destroyed? It has been destroyed several times already, and the loss has always been bringing new life. And what if we are doomed to such a future as our good Calvinistic brethren prescribe for us? It would indeed be a hopeless case if we were not destined to eternal fire of some kind; for that is the only way to keep growing. The lesson of breath is not fear of either burning or burial, but faith in things that may survive both. It teaches more faith in human life, which so endures through physical destructions and grows by them. It teaches more faith in human love, which is a deeper breath, burning out our lives only to bless them. It teaches more faith in the creative love, which breathes through ours, and consumes only to enlarge us. Through this divine fire, still burning in every bush to bring blossom and

fruit; burning better in our bodies to bring life, and better still in our minds to bring nobler thoughts, and best of all in our hearts to bring higher loves and hopes; — there seems to come a voice bidding us trust, not only while bodily life lasts, but beyond. "He who died at Azan" bade his friends mourn not: —

> "For death,
> Now I know, is that first breath
> Which our souls draw when we enter
> Life which is of all life center."

THE SIN IN A CENSUS

THE SIN IN A CENSUS

IT is a suggestive fact that the only public evil charged to Satan in the Old Testament is the taking of a census. His work with Job is only personal, — is hardly even sinful, since it is done at the suggestion of the Lord. But when Satan appears in this other passage and moves David to "number Israel," it is so great a sin that the Lord sends a severe pestilence to punish it. He even sends an angel to destroy Jerusalem, and above Mount Zion men see "the angel of the Lord stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand." So great is the danger that David seeks to avert it at any cost; — buys the spot for "six hundred shekels of gold," builds an altar and offers a sacrifice. Then at length the Lord relents, answers "from heaven by fire upon the altar," and makes the angel "put up the sword again in the sheath." And this altar is of such importance that its site afterward becomes that of Solomon's Temple. So closely does the Bible connect even the sanctuary and worship on

Mount Zion with the work to atone for the great and fatal sin of a census.

We need not insist upon the accuracy of the report. Census reports are not expected to be accurate; and there is evidence enough that this, like most of them, is exaggerated. For if we turn back from this story in "Chronicles" to the earlier account of the same event in "Samuel," not only are the census returns found much smaller, but this "six hundred shekels of gold" drops to "fifty shekels of silver," while both the sword of the angel and the supernatural fire from heaven disappear altogether. Even Satan disappears entirely, — and, instead of him, it is "the Lord" who "moved David" to "number Israel." But though the evil is so reduced in the older account, it is bad enough. There, too, the census brings the same pestilence with its seventy thousand deaths.

And, however contradictory the reported figures or facts, the story itself is clearly true. For not only Israel, but every good movement, must beware of pride in numbers, and trust only to the truth of its principles. Whenever a nation or denomination forgets this, and begins instead to be vain of its size and to think of its census, it falls into fatal sin. When its leaders, instead of aiming at justice and right, begin to "number" their following, Satan is always

there, urging them to it, and rejoicing in his success. The pestilence, too, is sure to come. However slow and insidious, it still spreads, infecting souls, corrupting character, diseasing society. The avenging angel stands with his sword drawn, certain to strike if not averted. And the averting penitence and sacrifice which, giving up shekels and show and the desire to "number," returns to the trust in righteousness alone, builds ever, as in the old story, the best religious altar, and leads to the temple of the Lord and the truest worship.

Scripture often rebukes the trust in numbers. A fine text says: "The Lord did not choose you because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all people." This power of the few is one of the commonplaces of history. It was well proved by these *Israelites*. Though "the fewest of all people," and though so often defeated, dispersed, oppressed, suppressed, — they yet outlasted all their enemies and conquered their conquerors. Their temple and sacred city fell before great Rome, — yet their Jehovah soon superseded Jove, and his worship spread through the Roman empire. They supplied to Christendom even its Scriptures. While the Church was cursing Jews, it used Jewish Psalms for its praise and prayers, and revered Jewish writings as the only

"word of God." It even declared a Jewess to be the "mother of God," and still praises the son of a Jewess as "very God of very God."

This little people have also shown their power in secular life, in spite of their long persecutions. Released at length from the Ghettos, they have rapidly advanced to the front ranks, not only in finance, but in literature, learning, even politics, — almost making panics in some of the great powers of Europe. Even England, after banishing them for centuries, and after abusing them in many a fiction, from Marlowe's "Barabbas" and Shakespeare's "Shylock" to Dickens' "Fagin," had to see one of these despised people become a powerful British Peer and even Prime Minister. Leroy Beaulieu happily pictures Lord Beaconsfield idolized not merely by the people, but in "the parlors of Piccadilly" and by "the *élite* of the most aristocratic nation of the globe," and seeing "from the top of his statue, on primrose day, the hands of the most titled ladies spread at his feet baskets of his favorite flower." Sometimes, too, they had to submit to Disraeli's sarcastic words: — as when he said all Christendom is worshiping a Jew as its God, and all Catholics are adoring a Jewess besides; or when he told of the persecution of the Hebrew by "that ungrateful Europe which owes to him the best part

of its laws, a fine portion of its literature, all its religion." So widely was little Palestine, with its poor territory and "fewest of all people," to conquer the world.

Little *Greece* was perhaps to conquer more. Its handful beating back the hosts of Persia was symbol of its far greater victories that still continue. Its influence has lived on, while far more populous nations have vanished like the summer flies. Said Sir H. S. Maine: "A ferment spreading from that source has vitalized all the great progressive nations of mankind"; and "except the blind forces of Nature, nothing moves in this world which is not Greek in its origin." It is interesting also to notice that Macaulay's famous fancy of some future traveler finding only a few ruins of London and of the great Saint Paul's, was first used by him to illustrate the duration, not of the Catholic Church, but of Athens, whose "influence and glory will still survive, fresh in eternal youth, exempt from mutability and decay."

Christianity, too, so despised in Paul's day, well illustrated his words that God hath "chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty," and "things which are not, to bring to nought things which are." So in Christendom, much

of the best and widest work has come from the smallest peoples. Think of little *Holland*, barely visible on a student's globe, and with much of it repeatedly buried by the sea, yet rapidly rising from such disasters, and from its long oppression by mighty Spain, to a front rank in agriculture, trade, art, learning, liberty, and religion. De Amicis says it became "the adopted country of science, the Exchange of Europe, the station for the commerce of the world." At the beginning of the seventeenth century, says Taine, "in culture as well as in the arts of organization and government, the Dutch are two hundred years ahead of the rest of Europe." At that time, says Hallam, "Holland was pre-eminently the literary country"; and Niebuhr calls a chamber in the University of Leyden "the most memorable room in Europe in the history of learning." Thorold Rogers tells how Holland "taught the western nations finance," "commercial honor," "international law," and religious tolerance. Says this Oxford professor of history: "For a long time that little storm-vexed nook was the university of the civilized world"; and "to the true lover of liberty, Holland is the Holy Land of modern Europe."

Nor are towns to be measured by their size. W. S.

Landor enthusiastically wrote of Florence: "A town, so small that the voice of the cabbage-girl in the midst of it might be heard at the extremes, reared within three centuries a greater number of citizens illustrious for their genius than all the remainder of the continent" in two thousand years. In our own land, the little village of Concord contained within a short distance, on a single street, not only the man who was to feed the country with the Concord grape, but Hawthorne and the Alcotts and Emerson, who have fed the higher wants of the world still more widely. Emerson himself used to expose the fallacy of trusting in numbers. Said he: "The truth, the hope of any time, must always be sought in the minorities"; "The founders of nations, the wise men and inventors who shine afterward as their gods, were probably martyrs in their own time"; "All history is a record of the power of minorities, and of minorities of one." Carlyle grimly answered from across the sea, with unspeakable scorn for the judgment of majorities, and for the political system which counts a fool's vote as good as a seer's, the meanest wretch equal to "Socrates or Shakespeare, and Judas Iscariot to Jesus Christ."

Without going to any such extreme, we can keep

the truth that the popular vote or verdict is not the one to seek for. F. D. Maurice said he had been in the minority all through this life, and hoped he should be in the next. Perhaps it is better not to care whether we are or not; but to cease from counting, and to remember the Scripture lesson that it is Satanic to "number Israel."

The important thing wanted is simply to stand for truth and rectitude. This is also taught in the fine Biblical story of *Gideon*. That leader, with the common notions about numbers, gathered a great army to oppose the invading hosts of Midian. But the Lord told him to cut it down, — to let all leave who wished. Most of them left, and thus reduced the army to ten thousand. But the Lord did not want even that number. They are "yet too many," said he, and ordered Gideon to reduce them again. This time he was told to test them by *upright attitude;* — to bring them to the water and reject "every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink," like brutes, but to keep those who, with more erect body, sipped from their hands. Nearly all failed in this test; and less than a hundredth part of the original army remained as the Lord's elect. Even these were not to fight in any worldly way, but to leave all their

weapons behind, to take only trumpets in their hands, and lights concealed in pitchers. So they did, — simply "blew the trumpets and brake the pitchers," showed the light, and shouted, "The sword of the Lord!" By this method alone these three hundred men turned to confusion and flight that vast array of Midianites, who were "like grasshoppers for multitude, and their camels without number as the sand by the seaside."

This story also may be overcolored, but it is correct. The true army of the Lord always leaves behind those who are cowardly or unwilling. It still further rejects all who bow themselves down in any brutal or base fashion, and counts as his elect only those who keep the manly attitude, upright with integrity and honor. And these do not fight with worldly weapons, but only blow the trumpet of truth, and break the old pitchers and prejudices so as to let the light shine out. For light is always the true "sword of the Lord," and conquers by its own power. Again and again in history have a little band of men, with truth alone to help them, vanquished all opponents. It is so in science, — and Copernicus conquered the Church. It is so in morals, — and Garrison won the victory. It is so in religion, — and Christ will yet

conquer Christendom. For though, in days of discouragement, men may think

> "Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne,
> Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
> Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own."

Men who stand erect for truth and right need never count their company, but can be assured that, however weak they seem, they have, as their allies, time and eternity, the universe and God.

THE RISE AND FALL OF SATAN

THE RISE AND FALL OF SATAN

IT is widely assumed that Satan appears often in the Old Testament, and notably in its opening story of Eden. Yet one has only to read that story to see that it does not mention him or contain the slightest reference to him or to any being like him. It makes the temptation come from one of those serpents to which the ancient East ascribed so much cunning, and it gives no suggestion of any worse agent. As Professor C. C. Everett recently wrote, "there is no hint of a devil" in that story; and the notion that its serpent is a demon, or is possessed by one, "finds no justification" there.

Nor does Satan appear in the Biblical narrative for ages after Eden. There is no sign of his presence during the thousands of years from Adam to Moses, nor in all the writings ascribed to Moses. The Pentateuch, though tracing so many evils and their causes, never refers one of them to Satan's agency. The long and elaborate "Law," though professing to

tell all that religion needed to know, does not once hint of his existence.

No more does the Biblical history or other writing for many generations after. Satan is not so much as mentioned in the long history of Joshua, or of the two centuries of Judges, or of the four hundred years of Kings, down to the end of their rule and the destruction of Jerusalem. He is not once mentioned in any of the other literature, on to the Babylonian exile. The kingdoms of both Israel and Judah had run their course and come to an end; the sacred Jerusalem and its temple had risen, reached their highest glory, and fallen; — but Satan had not yet been discovered. The famous religious leaders, from Moses and Samuel and David and Solomon and Elijah and Elisha, on to the great prophets, Amos and Hosea and Micah and Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel, had lived and taught and passed away; — but not one of them had left a word about Satan or the devil or a demon or any such being.

But during the exile in Babylonia, the belief in such a being gradually grew among the Jews. For there they came in contact with the Zoroastrian or Mazdean teaching that the rule of the world was not monotheistic and single, as their best prophets had taught, but divided between a good God and an evil Power at

enmity with him. This new doctrine was thus not only forced upon their notice, but was especially attractive to them at that time, when their troubles had so increased, and the very land and temple of God had been conquered by the heathen. The problem of evil naturally became prominent in their thoughts; and it seemed to find its easiest solution in that Mazdean doctrine of an evil Power opposed to God. This doctrine was indeed resisted by the best minds among them; — and in protest against it, the second Isaiah, the great Jewish prophet of the time of the exile, makes Jehovah say: "There is none besides me; I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things." Still, in spite of such protests from great prophets, the doctrine grew that the Lord did not "do all these things," but that evil was caused by that other Power at enmity to him.

This evil Power soon took also that Hebrew name which has since become so familiar. In the Mazdean sacred books, the hosts of evil were sometimes called "the opposition," or adversary; and the Jews adopted the same name, translating it, however, into their own Hebrew term, "*the Satan.*" Its use with the article shows that it was not at first a proper name; but it

soon came to be such, and to mean a personal opposer or adversary.

Such was the beginning of both the idea and name of Satan. It was so late in Biblical literature that it appears in only three passages in the Old Testament. The most important of these is in the book of Job, which is now regarded by scholars as written in that Babylonian exile, and which treats that same problem of evil then so pressing. The book naturally introduced this new "Satan" as the bringer of evil upon Job; — but it also shows how little the idea of him had then developed. For this Satan of the book of Job is not yet a rival of Jehovah, or even opposed to him, but is only his innocent agent. Satan appears here, not at all as an infernal being, but in heaven, "before the Lord," in "the presence of the Lord," at a meeting of "the sons of God," as if one of them. He goes out to bring various evils upon Job; — but only by the Lord's permission, and in order to test Job. These evils come, not from Satan, but from the Lord himself, — as Job also declares, "Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil?" Satan is only an officer of Jehovah's court; and M. Reville well compares him to the prosecuting attorney in our courts, appointed to try men and search out their faults. That is all that Satan is

in this book, — the prosecutor in Jehovah's court, mercilessly questioning Job's righteousness, and, like any district attorney, trying to make out the worst case against him; but showing no further enmity toward him, and none at all toward the human race, nor toward Jehovah. As Professor Everett says: "The Satan of the book of Job is not at all Satanic, in the later meaning of that term; he is still an angel; and in no sense is he a tempter." He is only the official accuser in the court of the Lord.

This also appears in the rather innocent name by which this Hebrew "Satan" is translated in the old Greek Septuagint, —"*Diabolos*." This word is quite interesting, since from it has come the Latin *Diabolus*, the Italian *Diavolo*, the Spanish *Diablo*, the French *Diable*, the German *Teufel*, the Dutch *Duivel*, and the English Devil; — all words with very bad meaning. But the bad meaning is mostly of later growth, and the original *Diabolos* meant only an accuser, or, at worst, a false accuser.

Besides this passage in Job, there are in the Old Testament two others, and only two, in which Satan is mentioned. One is in the book of Zechariah, where he stands by the high-priest, "to be his adversary." It seems to have been much the same office which he has in Job; — although Satan is here more unjust in

it, so that the Lord rebukes him, as he did not there. The other passage is in Chronicles, a work written some two centuries later, and one of the latest in the Old Testament. It is especially interesting in showing how Jewish thought had then changed, so as to ascribe to this Satan a particular act which had been ascribed before to Jehovah himself. This act was in moving David to number Israel. The older account in the Bible (2 Sam. 24 : 1) had laid this to Jehovah, and said : "The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David" to the numbering. But this later account (1 Chron. 21 : 1), written after the belief in Satan had come, lays it to him instead, and says : "Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." So far had the change of thought now gone, — even substituting Satan for the Jehovah of the older writing. But the change went no further here ; and, except in these three late passages, Satan is not mentioned in the whole Old Testament.

Still less is he mentioned under the name of "the devil." The word "devils," although occurring four times in our common English translation, was an error, and the Revised Version has removed it. But of "the devil," or any being like him, even our English Old Testament has not a word to say. Its nearest approach

to him is in those three late passages about Satan, which still leave him innocent and not yet an enemy of God.

But in the thought of the Jews he soon became such an enemy, — the cause of all evil, and hence of everything which they did not like. They now began to ascribe to Satan that temptation in Eden; and it was at length so taught in their apocryphal "Book of Wisdom," a century or so before Christ. They also began to assign to him subordinate agents, or demons. Such soon abounded in Jewish thought, as the cause of troubles of every kind, especially of insanity and nervous diseases. Even so cultivated a writer as Josephus taught this possession by them, and told how he had himself seen a magician heal a person so possessed and draw the demon out through the man's nostrils. Still more would the common people show such beliefs.

It would of course be quite natural for Jesus himself to share this belief; — and if he did not, his followers would be sure soon to teach that he did. Hence he is very frequently connected with Satan and demons in the thought of the early Church. The apocryphal Gospels tell, for instance, how even in his infancy his swaddling-clothes drove from another boy "a great multitude of devils" "in the shape of crows

and serpents"; how from the boy, Judas Iscariot, Satan once came "in the form of a dog"; how he once took possession of a woman and made her go out and "throw stones at people." Such stories were of course told in the New Testament, too. A large part of Jesus' miracles there are in casting out these devils from the sick and insane. Not only these, but Satan himself continually appears; — from the early chapter of Matthew where he comes three times tempting Jesus, on to the closing book of Revelation, which has so much to say about him and his all-pervading power in the world.

So curious, in this respect, is the *contrast* between the Old Testament and the New. That word "devil," which does not occur once in the former, occurs more than fifty times in the latter, and more than seventy times if we include its plural form. The greatest prophet of the Old Testament had utterly denied such a being, declaring that Jehovah does all things, evil as well as good, and that there is none else besides him; but the New Testament puts this Satan beside him, and sometimes triumphant against him, as even "the prince of this world."

The Bible also shows this same contrast in regard to the connected doctrine of *eternal punishment;* — for this is inseparable from Satan and was "prepared

for the devil and his angels." This eternal punishment, whether of him or of men, is taught only in the New Testament, and never in the Old. Our English Old Testament has indeed many repetitions of the word "hell"; but the Revised Version has removed most of them, and ought to have removed the rest. For the original Hebrew word is always "Sheol," with no such meaning, nor any very bad one. Into this "Sheol" go at death, not only the wicked, but the good. The Bible says that Jacob and Joseph are going there, that Job prays to be there; and the Psalmist says that not only he and all men shall be there, but Jehovah himself. "If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there." With so many Biblical saints and authors, and even Jehovah, in Sheol, it certainly was no bad place. Scholars say that in the early Jewish thought it was no place of punishment at all, — but only the underworld, where all alike went at death.

But along with the growing doctrine of Satan, a part of this Sheol became a place of punishment for his followers. It was so pictured about a century before Christ, in the apocryphal book of Enoch, which tells of its terrible lake of fire and brimstone, and of the tortures therein. Such beliefs continued to spread among the Jews, were naturally ascribed to Jesus,

and were elsewhere clearly taught in the New Testament. Not indeed by most of the authors, — and Paul in his Epistles furnished no texts for eternal torment. Such texts are nearly all confined to the two books of Matthew and Revelation, — but are there many and plain. In Matthew, for instance, Jesus orders sinners "into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels." In Revelation, that lake of fire and brimstone is asserted five times; and we are told that its inmates shall "have no rest day and night," but "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever." So far does the New Testament carry this doctrine which the Old had utterly ignored or even denied.

But these doctrines were carried much further by the Church, afterward. Nearly all the Church Fathers, and authorities for more than a thousand years after, expatiated more and more on that eternal torture. Even infants, if not properly baptized or elected, were consigned to it; — from the words of Augustine, who declared that all such descended into "everlasting fire," on to the American "Day of Doom," which most graphically pictured Christ condemning infants to "hell," and which Professor Tyler says was read for more than a century as "the one supreme poem of Puritan New England." That "lake of fire" within

the earth became a common subject, not only of sermons, but of innumerable church paintings and sculptures and books. Even so late as 1851, Dr. G. S. Faber's book on "The Many Mansions in the House of the Father" tells how, after the judgment, the earth is to be remade. Its surface, "beautiful beyond description," is to become "the home of the redeemed"; while within it "shall roll an ignited ocean of liquid fire, two thousand miles in depth, the peculiar residence of the wicked." For such sufferings beneath their feet would not at all interfere with the happiness of the redeemed. This curious doctrine has been taught repeatedly; — from the Church Father Tertullian, who wrote how he should "rejoice" and "laugh" in seeing "illustrious kings groaning there," on to our great Jonathan Edwards' words, that "the sight of hell-torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever."

Along with this doctrine, that of *Satan* also continued to grow, and he soon became more prominent in Christian thought than Jehovah himself. Theology taught, for more than a thousand years, that he had gained possession of the whole human race by Adam's fall, and that even Christ's atonement had been to redeem the race from Satan, rather than to satisfy God, as modern preachers teach. Nor did even that

redeem all the race, but the whole heathen world remained in Satan's hands. Even among Christians he was ever present and all-powerful. "In the cathedrals," says Andrew D. White, carved devils "clamber upon towers, prowl under cornices, peer out from bosses of foliage, perch upon capitals, nestle under benches"; while "above the main entrance, the most common of all representations shows Satan and his imps taking possession of the souls of men, and driving or dragging them into the flaming mouth of hell." The worship also largely regarded Satan. Sermons and prayers were to oppose him, sacraments and ceremonies to exorcize him, and the chief object of religion was to escape him. He was a prominent figure in the miracle-plays, and in the lives of all the saints. He was seen in life everywhere, and his fiends were innumerable. They invaded homes as incubi and succubi, and so left an ever-multiplying progeny. Johannes Wierus wrote that in his day the demons numbered 7,405,926, and were still increasing. They were so many that one of them said, "If all the Alps were divided among us, we should have but a pound apiece." Burton, in his "Anatomy of Melancholy," said that the air was fuller of them than of flies in summer; and Leo Suavius that it was as full as of snowflakes in a winter storm. They were powerful,

too; and even so late and learned a writer as Bishop Bossuet said "a single devil could turn the earth round as easily as we turn a marble."

Satan was hardly less active in the Protestant church. Luther saw him everywhere, and his "Table-Talk" has a long chapter on "the devil and his works." He says Satan brings hail and lightning, is "the cause and author of plagues," and "produces all the maladies which inflict mankind." He saw Satan even in his aches and dreams, in the flies lighting on his book, and in the rats disturbing his sleep. Indeed, he saw so much of Satan that he partly outgrew his fears, and tells how he was one night awakened by a noise in the cloisters, but, perceiving that it was only the devil, calmly went to sleep again. But not less did Luther fight against him; and he once said, "I should have no compassion on these witches; I would burn all of them." Such beliefs lasted long; and even John Wesley not only advocated the persecution of witches, but taught that Satan and his agents often brought diseases and even earthquakes. So in America, Increase Mather, in the same year in which he became president of Harvard College, published a collection of marvelous deeds of devils, and taught that thunder-storms came from Satan.

But to-day, what a *change!* Such beliefs have retired, until the college president who should hold them would hardly escape a lunatic-asylum. According to medieval thought, the witches' Sabbath could be held only in the night, and with the dawn the demons vanished. That seems to be the law, — they live only in darkness. With the growing light of recent times, the devil and all his agents, who were so active among the apostles and for fifteen hundred years after, have been vanishing, — and among intelligent men have become about as non-existent as they were in the Old Testament.

It is a change which we need not at all lament. Aside from all the terror and suffering which that belief brought, it caused immense injustice and cruelty. Think of the wrong which it brought for centuries against the *insane*, — and only to make them more so. Even the medicine it gave them was bad enough. An old prescription for "a fiend-sick man," after naming a long list of nauseous drugs, adds: "Sing seven masses over it, add garlic and holy water, and let him drink the dose out of a church bell." Quite likely such a dose, given with kindness and to the soothing sounds of music, might help, — though perhaps it would have helped quite as much without the lupine and lichen and githrife and cynoglossun and such things.

But lunatics were seldom treated with kindness, — and could not be, while thought possessed by Satan. Hence, while the church had its beautiful charities for widows and orphans and invalids, and even for foul lepers, it took almost no care of the insane. So late as 1789, John Howard said they were better treated in a Mohammedan asylum in Constantinople than in Christian London; and an authority says they had been better treated by Moslems for a thousand years. They were not only neglected, but tormented. An old exorcism howled pages of curses into the ears of the afflicted man or hysterical woman. The possessed persons were also whipped and tortured, with the idea that the torture was falling on the indwelling demon; and even Sir Thomas More commended this treatment. Still worse cruelties did this belief in Satan bring upon "witches"; and President White says that "in Germany alone, according to the most modest estimate, there perished within a single century, by an excruciating death, for this imaginary crime, not less than one hundred thousand lives."

In view of such wrongs we may well be grateful for the loss of the old belief. That loss has been a great *gain* in material things. The belief that disease came from demons filling the air like snowflakes made it all the more deadly; but the knowledge that the

"demons" were germs, or other natural influences, has been a successful exorcism indeed, healing thousands and lengthening the average life of all Christendom. Even more has been the moral gain, turning the old cruelty into charity, — until, to-day, Christians can hardly credit that their greatest American preacher in the eighteenth century said, "The sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever." Hardly less has been the religious gain, in seeing Deity no longer baffled and beaten by a devil, but supreme, as the great Hebrew prophet said, and ruling the universe with eternal order.

Still, there was in the old doctrine of Satan a great truth which we would not lose. To the human view, there has always been *evil* as well as good in the world, and always must be. Progress in earth's forms has necessitated not only creation, but destruction, — not only growth, but decay, — not only life, but death. The progress of the human race, and of every person in it, has come by the same process, — the loss of old habits, and the growth of better. To each advancing society and soul, there is always the good ahead to be gained, and the outgrown to be left behind; always the forward step to be taken, and the backward to be avoided; always the higher life to be

sought, and the lower to be shunned. These opposites, though parts of the same system, must by each individual be contrasted as good and evil, divine and devilish.

"Devil" has only dropped its initial, and "evil" still remains. Satan has lost his personality, but still survives and tempts men as he did Jesus in the story. He still tempts them in about the same way: first, through "hunger,"— that is, animal passions; second, through vanity and the desire to make a show on some "pinnacle" in the public view; third, and worst, through eagerness for worldly power, — sacrificing principles to gain "the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them." And he is still to be conquered as in that story, — not by contention or abuse, but as in Jesus' words, "Get thee behind me, Satan." We need no fight against evil as a fiend, no denunciation of it as devilish, — but only to put it "behind" us, as a thing to be left and outgrown. We have only to abandon it and go ahead; —

> "Move upward, working out the beast,
> And let the ape and tiger die."

Remember, too, that the "ape and tiger" have had their place, and that all evil and good are parts of the same creation, as that old prophet saw. Even the destructive earthquakes and floods come from the

same forces which have shaped the earth and still bless it. Even diseases come by the same laws by which the grain grows in the field. Decay, destruction, death are still advancing life, — and are bad only to our human outlook. Man, getting a moment's glimpse of infinity through the pin-hole of his present personality, must see what seem good and evil, separate and opposed to each other. But to the infinite view they are only the noon and night of the same revolving day, the spring and fall of the same celestial year, the flow and ebb of the same eternal tide, the rise and fall of the beating pulse of life and warming breath of love.

So too with moral evils. The passions have all contributed to the progress of life, and out of them have grown higher principles. Sacrifice began in selfishness, and even love in lust. Fraud, robbery, slaughter, war, have all been natural and helpful in the animal stages of life. Dirt has been defined as only matter out of place; and even our crimes and vices might be called actions out of place. When in place, in animal life and the evolution of the race, they were right enough, and steps toward something higher.

What we call *good* and *evil* are only the up and down in morals; — a distinction most important to

dwellers on earth, but not to the Spirit of infinite space, where up and down are unknown. Evils are lower steps in the ascending path of life. Each society or soul, looking up and down this path, must divide it into the good above and bad below. But the same ground which one looks down upon as bad, some other is looking up toward as good. The evil is only relative. It is not even real, to the infinite vision, which sees the ascent all undivided and one.

Through this thought we reach that spirit of forgiveness seen in Jesus, who, as Renan said, showed "a divine incapacity for seeing evil." We reach that impartiality which Jesus told men to observe and imitate in the heavenly Father, making his sun to rise and rain to fall on good and evil alike. We reach that charity which Paul said "taketh not account of evil." The highest thought will not dwell upon evil, but will seek rather to strengthen the good, which is the best cure of the bad. It will see, with Jesus, that peacemakers and lovers of enemies are the real "sons of God." It will see that human love is the highest religion, the holiest worship, the truest presence of God, and the best prophecy that the divine Love which has produced it will make it triumph over evil.

THE ENLARGING THOUGHT OF GOD

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RELIGION seems to begin everywhere with gods who are like men. Through its early stages they have even the bodies of men. Even the great Greek gods in the "Iliad" retain all their human organs and nerves. Ares is wounded by the spear of Diomedes, Hephæstus is lamed by his fall from heaven, and the supreme Zeus is a wife-beating husband. Relics of such thoughts are of course found in the Bible. It tells how Jehovah was "walking in the garden in the cool of the day"; how he was often seen "face to face," and "spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto a friend." Even the passage which declares that men could not see Jehovah's face and live adds that he said to Moses: "I will cover thee with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back." Such expressions are more than metaphor. They show the old beliefs which Jehovah rebuked in the Psalm, saying to man, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself."

After religion has outgrown the thought of gods in human form, it long represents them with human properties and passions, with the anger and even the appetites of men. They are often worse than men, — since religion is conservative, keeping the ideas of a lower past; so that the people of Athens become better than the gods of Olympus, whom Plato repudiates and Lucian ridicules. The gods are easily enraged, and their anger is appeased by praise and gifts, especially by gifts of food in sacrifice. For the sacrifices which have been so common in all religions were at first literal offerings of food to gods who were hungry; — and Professor William Robertson Smith says "a sacrifice is primarily a meal offered to the Deity."

The Jehovah of the early Israelites naturally showed these common human weaknesses. He is quick to anger, and we often read of his "wrath." He is vengeful, and savage in his vengeance, ordering whole tribes to be slaughtered, to the last child. But his vengeance can be averted and his anger appeased, like a man's, by homage, praise, prayers, prostrations, and the various ceremonies that show subjection. He is especially moved by those sacrificial gifts of food; so that burnt-offerings are the chief part of his, just as of a hundred heathen religions. These burnt-

offerings by Israelites to Jehovah are even called, in the Bible, "the bread of their God." He is also gratified by pleasant odors; — from the early day when he "smelled a sweet savor" in Noah's sacrifice, on through all the elaborate laws for burning incense before him. He is only a God of Israel, with many rivals in heathen gods who are just as real. He forbids the worship of other gods because he is "jealous" of them; and he declares that even his "name is Jealous." But he cannot overthrow those other gods in Israel; and even the great Solomon builds shrines to four of them at Jerusalem, and still later kings long worship them.

But some of the later Old Testament writers, like wise men in other religions, had quite outgrown these earlier ideas. Monotheism had now come among them, and Jehovah was seen as the God, not of Jews alone, but of all nations and all Nature. A psalmist finds him not only in Palestine, but in the uttermost parts of the sea, in light and darkness alike, in heaven above and Sheol below. Jeremiah makes him "fill heaven and earth"; and one says, "the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him." Or notice the sublime sentences about him in the book of Isaiah. Instead of the former God of Israel, "jealous" of other gods, he upholds the whole earth, measuring

its seas in the hollow of his hand, weighing the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance, and considering the nations as but "the fine dust of the balance"; — nay, "all nations before him are as nothing," and "less than nothing." He says: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways." He wants no temple, —"where is the house that ye can build him?" He is too great for any sacrifices, and says all the forests of Mount Lebanon are not sufficient for the sacrificial fire, nor all its beasts for a burnt-offering. He even hates the old offerings, and says, "he that sacrificeth a lamb is as if he cut off a dog's neck," and "he that killeth an ox, as if he slew a man." He wants no more of their formal worship, —"incense is an abomination to me"; "yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear"; but "cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek justice, relieve the oppressed." So Micah says the Lord requireth nothing of man but "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly" with him. Such was the teaching of the higher prophets, and of the best Jews after them.

Jesus continued it, making righteousness, mercy, and meekness the true religious service; especially mercy, carried to the extreme of forgiveness and love.

He also brought God into a nearer and tenderer relation, emphasizing the doctrine that he is "our Father," and that all who loved their enemies, and all peacemakers, were especially "sons of God." The epistle of John dwells upon this idea, and declares that "every one who loveth is begotten of God." It brings God still nearer, and says, "if we love one another," he "dwelleth in us." It even gives to the idea of God an almost impersonal breadth, as of a principle, and says, "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him." This writer does indeed seem to see God in no love except that of the Christians, but Paul extends the thought to others. He not only writes to the corrupt Corinthian church, "Ye are the temple of God, and God dwelleth in you," but, in his reported address to the pagans, quotes their poet, — "in him we live and move and have our being"; and, in his supposed epistle to the Ephesians, he says, God is "Father of all, over all and through all and in all." Instead of counting the earth as his "footstool," and all its nations as "less than nothing," God fills the earth with his presence, lives in all its nations, and is enthroned not only in the heavens, but in the human heart.

So large a thought is found in some of the New Testament writers. Not that it was peculiar to them;

for the thought of God immanent in all men and life had long been taught among pagan thinkers, and was a common doctrine of the Stoics. Nor was it taught by all the New Testament writers, and their general thought falls far below it. But here and there they touch it. In one passage, God has outgrown not only the human passions, but almost the human personality of the earlier thought, and has become the principle of love uniting Christians. In another, he has become larger than Christian love, and almost one with universal life; and, instead of being enthroned on high in the heavens, he infolds and fills the world and all things in it. So does the Bible, with its many strata of thought reaching through a thousand years, show us the growth in the idea of God, from a narrow and "jealous" Jehovah dividing men, to a universal love uniting them; from a person of human form showing his body to Moses, to a life pervading all things, too vast and spiritual to be limited by any form.

This large thought of God was long kept by a part of the Church. It was taught by Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Athanasius, and others, who accepted the teaching of the Stoics, — regarded Deity as filling the universe and ever working through natural laws. Had their views prevailed, we should have had a noble

Christian theology, seeing God everywhere in the human and natural, and so identifying religion with all knowledge and human progress.

But a very different theology was destined to prevail, and to separate Christianity from Nature. This came chiefly from Saint Augustine, who followed the opposite Gnostic teaching that man and Nature were vile, and that Deity dwelt altogether apart from them, acting upon them only occasionally through intermediate and miraculous agents. For various reasons, says John Fiske, "the Augustinian theology prevailed; and, in the dark ages which followed, it became so deeply inwrought into the innermost fibers of Latin Christianity that it remains dominant to-day alike in Catholic and Protestant churches. With few exceptions, every child born of Christians in Western Europe or America grows up with an idea of God, the outlines of which were engraved upon men's minds by Augustine," more than three centuries after the apostles.

Thus the narrow thoughts of God, which had been so nobly outgrown in Hebrew prophets and heathen sages, in pagan Stoics and many early Christians, all returned. Instead of a "Father of all, over all and through all and in all," Jehovah again became the God

of a single religion, and at enmity with all others. Not even in Christendom was he supreme, but was thought half-dispossessed by Satan. Even among Christians, he ceased to be the principle of love uniting them, and again became a person of jealousy and hate, punishing every one who did not hold the proper opinions about him, and so making Church history for centuries mainly a series of quarrels over theological questions. He again came to be pleased with the fasts and forms in religion which Isaiah made light of, and his worship came to consist mainly of liturgies, ceremonies, and show. Even the old doctrine of sacrifice came back in a form more dishonorable than before, and it was taught that, if he did want no more blood of lambs, he demanded that of his own son. Almost his bodily form came back. He was painted on church walls and windows with the limbs and clothes of a man. In the miracle-plays he came on the stage as a man; and Lewes' life of Goethe tells of one where Jehovah was "seen sleeping on his throne during the crucifixion," and, when waked up and informed of it, declared with astonishment that he had known nothing about it.

God came again to be represented, not merely with the weakness, but with the wickedness of men, and with far worse cruelty than he showed to the Canaan-

ites of old. The Church for centuries taught that he wanted Christians to treat heretics worse than Joshua did the Hittites, and in his name they butchered and burned men in ways that made Saul's slaughter of the Amalekites appear humane. Protestants did less burning, but quite enough; and they long continued to teach that God himself would burn most of his children forever, and that he wanted to be praised for it. This was taught by even the best men. A simple woman is said to have commended her minister as "so good that he never said an unkind word against any being except our heavenly Father." Good ministers did indeed say the most unkind things against him, in their many sermons on total depravity and eternal torture. They represented him as infinitely more cruel than the cruelest man, and worse than the wickedest. All the cruelty and crime on earth did not amount to a millionth part as much as preachers charged against their heavenly Father every Sunday for centuries. Against him, at any rate, they made out a clear case of "total depravity."

Theology has indeed taught that God's "thoughts are not our thoughts,"— but that they are far foolisher than ours. It has taught, not that his ways are as much better than ours as "the heavens are higher than the earth,"— but that they are as much worse

than ours as the idea of "hell" was worse than human homes.

But the renaissance and return to Nature began again to bring larger thoughts of God. These have of course not seemed so in their time, and the enlargement of the idea has always been feared at first as the loss of it. Even the teaching that Deity has not the bodily form of men seemed denial of him, and made the old monk Serapion say in sorrow, "You have taken away my God." But through these denials the idea has ever remained, deepening and broadening.

When men began to deny the doctrine of eternal punishment, their thought seemed impious, almost atheistic. But it was soon seen that the impiety was on the other side, and that the real denial of God was in the doctrine that made him so ungodlike.

When they began to doubt whether God died for us on Calvary, this again seemed denial. But to-day we see that the denial of Deity was rather in the thought that he could die, and the atheism was in the doctrine that he was slain by a few soldiers.

To question the atonement seemed impious at first. But it was at length seen that the impiety was rather in the dogma which made God demand the death of

his dearest son before he would forgive his own children for sins which they did not commit. Lord Bacon said, "It were better to have no opinion of God at all than such an opinion as is unworthy of him"; and Bacon went on to approve Plutarch's saying that he would sooner have his own existence denied than be accused of eating his children, as was told of Saturn.

Even the denial of Satan seemed profane at first. But the profanity was rather in the thought of God being so dispossessed by a rival, and the denial of this doctrine was only the larger assertion of Deity. To deny that the Bible was the infallible and only revelation of God seemed altogether impious. But, rather, it offered an excuse for all the errors there, and showed his larger revelation in Nature and history and human souls. The doubt of miracles seemed at first to profane God. But thinking men soon saw that these interruptions of the divine order of Nature would be no credit to him, and that the order itself reveals a far truer Deity. As Mrs. Ripley said, she did not show disbelief in God by denying miracles, but denied them because she believed in him.

All the sciences enlarged the thought of Deity. Geology, which seemed so irreligious in spoiling the old story of creation, only shows a far vaster creation, stretching through countless ages beyond those six

days, and still continuing. Astronomy, which seemed at first so atheistic, rather reveals an infinitely wider world than Isaiah saw, and a God who holds in the hollow of his hand, not the mere waters, but the Milky Way; — who puts in the balance, not the hills alone, but the whole heavens. Yet this God, though so great, does not count the nations "as nothing," nor the earth as his footstool, but cares for every atom. The hand that hid him from Moses reveals him to us, holding the heavens in eternal harmony, and writing throughout the earth everywhere, from stone strata up to seeds and souls, his eternal laws.

These laws seemed at first to deny God, but only proved him. Newton, referring all the celestial movements to gravity, seemed to leave no room for Deity. But to further thought, gravity only showed the universal and divine order; and Voltaire said Newton had proved God, whom the catechism had only asserted. Chemistry and other sciences, reducing all earthly changes to law, seemed for a time to dispense with Deity. But men soon saw that laws are only the way in which a mysterious force behind them works, and that their constancy, which we can always trust, only shows how good is that way. Religion also learned this; and natural theologians at last took these same sciences, which had been thought to deny God, as

proof that he is much truer and better than the church had thought. Order was only a sign of a diviner world.

When the evolutionists came teaching a vaster and more perfect order, — that creation itself had been all and always in accordance with law, — they were of course called atheists. But their doctrine promises to be the most religious of all. To-day many clergymen seem to see less objection to Darwinism than Darwin did. They say that the doctrine of evolution will only perfect the idea of God, by declaring that his way has never been the fickle and human one of starts and stops, but always that diviner way of unvarying law and unerring order.

So does the idea of God persist and progress. We break each form of it, only to find that we have broken into a larger. We lose one God, only to discover that we have found a greater. We lose, one after another, those ways of God which are our ways; but, with further thought, we see that, however good they may be in man, they would be unwise in Deity, — faults in his perfection, limitations to his infinity. Already, we see that the least trace of human fickleness or caprice would dishonor him. Already, wise men see that will — in the human sense of a purpose

subject to change — would be a weakness in the Power that rules the world.

They see that even love, in our sense of the word, would not be good in a God. That human fondness, which we call love, is partial in its nature, and only its absence makes possible that larger love which can care for the universe. Love is the divinest feeling we can know ; — and seeing how life is ever born from love, and ever rising towards more perfect love, we can still say that "God is love." But infinite love must be so broad and deep as to absorb all the little meanings which we can give the word. Here, too, the ways of God must be as much higher than human ways as the heavens are higher than the earth.

We are beginning to see that even personality, in any human sense of the term, would not honor Deity, but would deny his infinitude and mar his perfection. Even among men, the greatest are those who most rise above the limitations of person, and live in impersonal principles, following truth and goodness regardless of their own feelings. What we value in an earthly ruler is not his personal feelings, but his freedom from them, and his utter fidelity to the right. The trouble with our officers is that they have too much personality, warping them from that fidelity and leading them to help themselves and

their favorites. We want in our civil rulers as much impersonality as possible; and why should we not want it in the ruler of the universe, seeing that it would make him all the more divine? Hence Emerson said: "I feel that there is some profanation in saying God is personal";—"I deny personality to God because it is too little, not too much." A prominent scientist said, "in denying God's personality we need not consider him as below the being of a person, but as infinitely above what person means in the language of men." Here, too, we find that God's ways are not our ways, but as much above them as the heavens are above the earth. For us to think that the highest must be limited by personality, because we are, is somewhat as if the oyster should think that the highest life must be shut in by a shell.

What right have we to measure life by our little experience? The earth shows it rising from the amœba to man, and in man rising from the savage who cannot count six, to the sage who calculates the course of comets. The earth, too, is but an atom in an infinite space filled with larger worlds, as our air is with dust. With the rocks under us and the race around us showing such progress, and with the heavens shining above us to show infinite possibilities, shall we

limit life by ourselves? For man to conclude that he has attained the summit of even earthly life is somewhat as if the old Jurassic reptiles, when they represented the highest civilization of the earth, had formed the same conclusion. And for man, because he knows no higher life, to suppose that Deity is like himself, is about as wise as if the barnacles on a lone rock in mid-ocean should suppose that they show the highest possible existence, and that God is "altogether such a one" as themselves.

It is more rational and reverent to admit with the prophet that God's ways are not our ways, and to leave him undescribed. This, too, the wisest Hebrew poets taught when they wrote of a God "whom no man hath seen or can see"; "we know him not"; "his greatness is unsearchable"; "touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out." This the wisest Christians and deepest thinkers have confessed. Even Paul came very near being an agnostic in his words to the Corinthians: —"If any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." In the same century with Calvin, the revered Richard Hooker wrote: "Our soundest knowledge [of God] is to know that we know him not as indeed he is, neither can know him; and our safest eloquence concerning him is our silence, when we confess with-

out confession that his greatness is above our capacity and reach." Spinoza said "to define God is to deny him." A modern orthodox writer declares that "a God understood would be no God at all," and "to think that God is as we think him would be blasphemy." Arthur Hugh Clough's poem praises him as "unknown because divine." True reverence speaks in William Watson's lines: —

> "Unmeet to be profaned by praise
> Is he whose coils the world infold;
> The God on whom I ever gaze,
> The God I never once behold;
> Above the cloud, beneath the clod,
> The Unknown God, the Unknown God."

To leave God unknown and even unnamed is no loss of him. It is perhaps a surer way to find him. Hermann Melville remarked to Hawthorne that, if God were but left out of the dictionary, he would be seen in the streets; and Robert Collyer's reported saying is, "I'll believe in God if you'll let me alone." Even the reverent Mr. Gannett not only sings how

> "We find him not by seeking long,
> We lose him not unsought,"—

but elsewhere represents God himself as rebuking the too familiar use of and insistence upon his name:

"Never more name me! Nameless, I hold men ever, draw them ever on and on; and you are atheizing them with your kind stress about my name. Silence names me as well as sound." But, though unnamed, God still speaks, everywhere and better than of old. Hear him in the poet's lines:—

"I am the blush of the morning, and I am the evening breeze;
I am the leaf's low murmur, the swell of the terrible seas;
I am the mote in the sunbeam, and I am the burning sun;
'Rest here,' I whisper the atom; I call to the orb, 'Roll on!'
I am what was, is, shall be, — creation's ascent and fall;
The link, the chain of existence, — beginning and end of all."

Real atheists are rare, and Theodore Parker argued that they are impossible. Of course many men are called so; and John Fiske tells of the minister in early New England who was charged by the Puritans with setting up "a schole of athism," just because he was an Episcopalian and used the Book of Common Prayer. Of course many men profess atheism. But they can hardly deny Deity even when they try. Said a blatant and blundering lecturer, "I am an atheist, thank God!" Denial of Deity is seldom any more successful. What is called "atheism" is generally the denial of narrow definitions of God in order to assert better, — or to reach the best of all by leaving him undefined. Emerson liked Thoreau's

saying that God himself might prefer atheism. One of Renan's "Philosophical Dramas" is a dialogue in heaven, wherein Gabriel, speaking of the earth and its skeptics, says to Jehovah: "If I had thine omnipotence, I would quickly reduce those wicked atheists to silence." But Jehovah benevolently replies: "Ah, Gabriel, thou art faithful; but thy fidelity makes thee narrow. Learn my tenderness for men who doubt or deny. They deny the image, grotesque or abominable, which has been put in my place; but, in that world of idolaters and hypocrites, they alone really respect me." Often, too, it is at length learned that they best respect him. Spinoza was long thought the arch-atheist of his time. He was called "the prince of atheists" and "the wickedest atheist that ever lived." But Novalis afterward called him "a God-intoxicated man," as if too much possessed with the thought of Deity. Schleiermacher said: Spinoza not believe in God? — he did not believe in anything but God; and a recent scholar called him "the man who possessed the highest consciousness of God in his day."

So does the atheism of one age become the theism of the next, and one theology fall to make room for a better. Charles Lyell, traveling in France during the revolution of 1830, and watching the crowd take

down the cross from the cathedral of Perpignan, heard some one say: "Each in his turn; the good God has had his." Rather, crucifixes and ceremonies have their turn; cathedrals and churches, theologies and philosophies, have their turn; but God's turn is eternity, and he survives all revolutions. Said O. B. Frothingham: "Definitions of God have been vanishing, idols have been tumbling, symbols have been falling away, trinities have been dissolving, personalities have been waning and losing themselves; — but the Being has been steadily coming forward from the background, looming up from the abyss."

Nor has this "Being" lost the qualities for religion to revere and love. Seeing how this Power pervades an infinite universe, ever working the miracle of new creation and advancing life, yet everywhere working through laws that can be trusted, we are forced to say that we have a far greater and truer God than our fathers knew. Seeing how this Power works for righteousness, making evil undo itself, making the just cause prevail, and even out of physical defeat bringing new spiritual growth and moral progress, we can still say, "God is good." Seeing how this Power fills the earth with joys that no sorrow can repress, ever smiles upon us in the beauty of human faces, and ever infolds us in the warmth of human affection,

we can still say that "God is love," and can still trust that this love is deeper and diviner than human reason can fathom.

> "The letter fails, the systems fall,
> And every symbol wanes;
> The Spirit overbrooding all,
> Eternal Love, remains."

And man still prays, more reverently than by any name; — as in Mr. Cranch's Psalm:

> "Thou, so far we grope to grasp thee;
> Thou, so near we cannot clasp thee;
> Thou, so wise our prayers are heedless;
> Thou, so loving they are needless!
> In each human soul thou shinest;
> Human-best is thy divinest.
> In each deed of love thou warmest;
> Evil into good transformest.
> Soul of all, and moving center
> Of each moment's life we enter;
> Breath of breathing, light of gladness,
> Infinite antidote of sadness;
> All-preserving ether flowing
> Through the worlds, yet past our knowing; —
> Never past our trust and loving,
> Nor from thine our life removing;
> Still creating, still inspiring,
> Never of thy creatures tiring;
> Artist of thy solar spaces
> And thy humble human faces;

Mighty glooms and splendors voicing,
And thy plastic work rejoicing;
Through benignant Law connecting
Best with best and all perfecting.
Though all human races claim thee,
Thought and language fail to name thee.
Mortal lips be dumb before thee!
Silence only can adore thee!''

CHRISTIANITY THEN AND SINCE

CHRISTIANITY THEN AND SINCE

THE strangest thing in Church history is the contrast between Christ's own teachings and those now called by his name. A large part of the latter plainly did not come from him, but from others long after him, and, as John Fiske said, were "unwarranted by Scripture and never dreamed of by Christ or his apostles." The dogmatic and harsh doctrines of the later Church drop away, little by little, as we go backwards through the previous writings; and the nearer we approach to Jesus himself, the more reasonable, the more humane, the better he appears.

We see this even in going to our common version of the New Testament, which contains only a few passages supporting doctrines that are the substance of later creeds. We see it more in going further back to the old manuscripts, which are used in our Revised Version, and which omit some of these passages. For instance, the famous verse about the three witnesses, — the chief passage for proving

the "trinity," and regarded by many as the only proof, — is altogether absent from the oldest three manuscripts, is entirely omitted in the Revised Version, and is now universally rejected by scholars as a spurious addition, not belonging to the New Testament at all. Often, the later text adds theological matter in this way. It adds the term "Christ" in twenty-five places, and sometimes with entire change of meaning. Where the early manuscripts and the Revised Version declare (Eph. 3 : 9) that God "created all things," our common version is that he "created all things by Jesus Christ." That startling phrase making Jesus the Creator is only an addition to the original sentence. We need not suppose that the person who added it was dishonest. He probably believed, and quite innocently wrote those words making Jesus the very Creator of the universe and of all things in it. But the original text did not hint any such doctrine, or so much as mention Jesus at all.

Not only particular beliefs, but even the need of belief, and punishment for unbelief, have been thus added. The apostle's requirement of the Ethiopian eunuch that he must "believe," and the Ethiopian's reply, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God," are both lacking in the early manuscripts, and are both omitted from the Revised Version. Notice, too,

the passage in Mark telling how Jesus "upbraided them with their unbelief," and added, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." This is the only passage in the synoptic gospels that pronounces a curse on unbelief; — and we know how often preachers have taken it for text and drawn from it the most frightful sermons. Yet it is wholly absent in the early manuscripts. That curse on unbelief does not come from Jesus, or even from the original gospel, but only from some later and unknown writer who thought it ought to be there.

Thus do harsh and dogmatic sayings in our New Testament fail to appear in its earlier forms, leaving Christianity more reasonable and more humane. And we infer that this would be seen even more if we could go further back. When so much of the dogmatic and narrow drops away as we go to the manuscripts of the fourth century, doubtless yet more would if we could go to the earlier ones of the second, and would leave the New Testament a still better book.

But probably a much greater and better change would be found if we could go behind the New Testament record, to the real teachings of Jesus himself. For when those teachings have been so changed and corrupted even since they were written, how much more so they must have been during the many years

while remaining unwritten. During those years they were merely told from mouth to mouth, kept in faulty memories, and misunderstood by faulty minds. That they were so misunderstood even by the apostles is repeatedly told in the New Testament itself. To Philip, Jesus said, "Have I been so long time with thee, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" Even to the foremost Peter, Jesus once said, "Thou art an offense unto me, for thou savorest not of the things that be of God." Even John, who has so curiously obtained a reputation for gentleness, Jesus has to rebuke because John wanted to call down fire to consume a village which would not receive them. When Jesus thus censured the very apostles for their harshness, narrowness, and misunderstanding of him, the plain inference is that they did misunderstand him, and that he was a much nobler soul than they reported.

This inference is sustained by a closer study of the New Testament. For the nearer we get to Jesus himself, the less dogmatic, the more simple, humane, and beautiful become both his teachings and his character. The theology is found mostly not in his reported words, but in the writings of others. It is found chiefly in the many epistles from Paul and his school.

Not, indeed, that we would underrate Paul. He was a most brave and tender-hearted man. He was of broad mind, the apostle to the gentiles, seeking to widen Christianity from the little movement of a Jewish sect into a religion for all mankind. Paul was peculiarly filled with the spirit of Jesus, and his many sentences for charity and love are among the best in the Bible and in all literature. But not the less is he an inadequate exponent of Jesus' own thought. He does not claim ever to have seen Jesus, except in a vision after the latter's death. Nor did Paul try to learn from the other apostles who had seen him, but, as he tells us in his epistle to the Galatians, took particular pains to keep away from them and from Jerusalem. The New Testament shows that he often disagreed with them, sometimes censured them; and even of Peter he says, "I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." Hence a considerable part of the early Church did not regard Paul as an authority, and hardly as a Christian. He was, besides, a man of visions and speculative thought; — and, though he was the chief founder of Christian theology, he evidently evolved it from his own consciousness, rather than from the traditions of apostles or from words of Jesus. Hence, in seeking what Jesus himself really taught, we must pass by the epistles of Paul

and his school, notwithstanding their abundant excellences.

Of far more value for learning what Jesus taught, is the epistle of James, which has been regarded by many as written by Jesus' own brother, and is regarded by all as representing the thought of the Jerusalem apostles. This epistle opposes and even makes light of Paul's doctrine of justification by faith ; — so much so that Luther condemned it as teaching "contrary to Paul." It is curiously free from theological doctrines, and is mainly a moral exhortation to patience, purity, and love. It rebukes the rich, pleads for the poor, even for giving them a good seat at the meetings ; and expressly defines "religion" as "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." In all this, it doubtless represents Jesus' first followers. It is indeed much like the recently discovered "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," a work of the first century, which is mainly moral and says nothing about faith.

We need not stop to notice any other New Testament writing, except the four gospels. The so-called epistles of Peter are now regarded as having been written long after he died ; — and perhaps even Peter himself, with all his warmth and worth, would not have given us a perfect knowledge of Jesus, since he

thrice declares with an oath that he never knew Jesus at all. Nor can we learn of Jesus best through the writings which bear the name of John. "The Revelation," though widely regarded as a genuine work of the apostle John, treats of Jesus' "second coming," rather than of his earthly life; and it evidently is not true to Jesus' spirit, for it ascribes to him the same cruelty which he so rebuked in John. If Jesus so censured John for wanting to destroy a few unbelievers, he would have censured him far more for destroying them all so fiercely in this book. The epistles and gospel bearing the name of John put the same emphasis on belief for which Jesus rebuked him. They cannot rightly represent Jesus, even if they came from John; — but most scholars agree that they were not written until long after John died. They contain some of the finest passages in all religious literature, and the gospel contains much of great value about Jesus' life. But their theology, and their insistence upon believing it, are of later origin, and must be omitted in our inquiry as to what Jesus taught.

So we pass to the other and older three gospels as our best authority. They are quite in the spirit of that epistle of James. They give our fullest account of Jesus' life and sayings, and their accounts, when disagreeing with the fourth gospel, generally agree

with each other. They agree in little things; — such as in dating the crucifixion on the same day, while the fourth puts it on a different day; and in dating Jesus' cleansing of the temple in the same year, while the fourth puts it in a different year. They all agree in making Jesus' teaching plain and simple, while the fourth makes it metaphysical and mystical. Still more important, they all agree in showing Jesus touchingly human, tempted, suffering, and declaring his weakness and want of knowledge; — while the fourth shows in him no weakness, no temptation, no suffering even on the cross, but makes him a God from all eternity, knowing all things and even creating all. Commentators try to reconcile these conflicting representations by saying that they show the two different sides of Jesus' nature. But the two sides will not go together. He could not be weak and omnipotent at the same time; could not be ignorant of a thing and know it all the while. We are forced to choose between the two representations. Nor can we doubt which to choose. The three agreeing accounts outweigh the other; the three earlier outweigh the later. The fourth gospel is of great value, and rich in spiritual truths; but as an authority for Jesus' real teaching we have to prefer the other three.

Nor can we take even these three without a critical

reading. They too, while containing our oldest account of Jesus, were not written in their present forms until long after his death. Hence they often disagree, even where we should least expect it. For instance, there is nothing in which they should more agree than in their record of the inscription on Jesus' cross, so short and plain for all to see. Yet this inscription is recorded in the four gospels in four different forms, no two alike. Such disagreements are often not merely in words, but in meaning. Even the records of the beatitudes so disagree. Where Matthew makes Jesus say, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," Luke makes him say, "Blessed are ye poor,"— that is, in property. Where Matthew makes him say, "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness," Luke omits the "righteousness," and gives it, "Blessed are ye who hunger now,"— that is, for food. So plain is it that Jesus' words are not always recorded with accuracy even in the first three gospels.

But, however fallible in details, these gospels give a general idea of Jesus' teaching. They show how it contrasted with our creeds, and even with other New Testament writings. It contrasted in language; — and in passing from the epistles and fourth gospel to the first three, we pass from mystical speech to the "breath and sunshine of the hills," as Dr. Martineau

said, —"to the language of life, born in the field, the boat, the olive ground." It contrasted in the same way in the naturalness of its religion, and is curiously devoid of the later doctrines about human nature and about himself.

Even that fundamental doctrine which the Evangelical Alliance affirms, —"the utter depravity of human nature in consequence of the fall,"— is not found in these gospels. Not once in them does Jesus allude to any "fall," or speak a word about native depravity. Instead of teaching that children are born depraved, he even takes them for examples of purity; and says, "Suffer little children to come unto me," "for of such is the kingdom of God." Instead of saying, with Jonathan Edwards, that "in God's sight" children are naturally "vipers and infinitely more hateful than vipers," Jesus says they are just what God's kingdom is made of. Nor did he want the children converted; but his words are, "be converted and become as little children." The conversion he taught was not from Nature, but from formalism back to Nature. Of any mysterious regeneration, or of any depravity calling for it, these three gospels have nothing to say.

Nor does Jesus in them teach the accompanying doctrine of the "vicarious atonement." In Matthew he does indeed have one clause about his blood shed

"for the remission of sins." But both Mark and Luke, in reporting the same conversation and the same sentence, omit this clause. Surely they would not have omitted the most important part of the sentence. Evidently they had not heard of it. Evidently Jesus did not say it; but, like so many other things, it was added by a later writer who thought he ought to have said it.

Even about his own nature, Jesus' teaching in these three gospels is curiously unorthodox. In them he nowhere hints that he is a God, but refuses to be called even "good." If he calls himself "son of God," he gives the same name to many others; and even the epistle of John declares, "now are we the sons of God," and "every one that loveth is begotten of God." Even if Jesus used the term in the especial sense of the expected Messiah, still that Messiah, in Jewish thought, was to be no god or demi-god. The Jew Trypho, as quoted by Justin Martyr, said, "we all expect that Messiah will be a man born of men." Jesus nowhere hints even of his miraculous birth from a virgin. Nor is that birth taught anywhere in the New Testament, except in the introductions to Matthew and Luke; — and even Matthew and Luke deny it repeatedly by declaring him the son of Joseph, and still more by their elaborate genealogical tables tracing

his ancestry through Joseph. For why take such pains to trace Jesus' parentage forty generations back through Joseph, if after all Joseph was not his parent? Those two miraculous birth-stories most clearly contradict the gospels in which they stand. They also repeatedly contradict each other; — one making his parents dwell in Nazareth before his birth, and the other making them only migrate there after his birth; — one inserting a long journey to Egypt which the other makes impossible. Evidently these birth-stories were told of him only by an adoring generation afterward, just as they were told of so many other men before him and in his own times.

In these three gospels, Jesus does not even seem eager for personal honor. In one long passage he expressly identifies himself with the poor and the despised; teaches that the true way to honor him is to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the prisoners; and says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Even the sayings in which Jesus seems to exalt himself are so opposed elsewhere as to make us think he did not utter them. He is represented as teaching that he should return supernaturally soon after death, in that same generation, "coming in the clouds of heaven with great glory" and with "a great

sound of a trumpet," to establish the kingdom of God with sudden revolution. But when we find him teaching elsewhere so wisely that this kingdom was to be of slow growth, like the silent grain and mustard and unseen leaven, — a spiritual kingdom in the souls of men, coming "not with observation," — we have to conclude that the other and cruder portrayal of it came not from Jesus, but from the ardent hopes of those followers who were always misunderstanding him.

He is also represented as working many miracles; — though no more than the man Elijah, who also, according to the Old Testament, raised the dead to life, and ascended bodily to heaven, and was expected to return thence. But when we find Jesus rebuking the desire for miracles or "signs," and declaring that not one should be given to that generation (Mark 8 : 12), we are disposed to think that he really made no claim to work them, and that they, too, were only told of him by credulous admirers, just as they have been told of other great men. And when we see his simplicity, his modesty, and the spirituality of his teaching, we doubt whether he even claimed to be that Messiah whom the common people were expecting, and whether that doctrine also was not the mere belief of his devoted followers.

So does a rational study of these three gospels clear Jesus' character of all fanaticism and superstition, and exalt him into a spiritual teacher of the highest order, whose divine lessons were distorted and lowered by his disciples. He was a great and beautiful soul, drawing followers by the charm and power of his personality, and teaching the true religion of Nature and humanity. For artificial forms and observances he had little care. He broke the Sabbath, they said; did not fast, or teach his disciples to; neglected the ceremonial washings and ways; ate with publicans and sinners, and mingled with the disreputable. He took the world for his church, common people and even outcasts for its communicants, rebuked injustice and exclusiveness; and preached the simple religion of life, of brotherhood, of love, and of trust in the heavenly Father.

How he preached it, let the Church itself tell us. In these gospels there is one long section, filling three chapters, which the church calls Jesus' "*sermon on the mount.*" His other sayings are mostly occasional, but these are especially honored as his "sermon," his real preaching. Critics also, though not regarding them as a connected utterance, agree with the church that they best show his religious teaching. They

seem to be the oldest and hence most genuine collection of his precepts. Perhaps they are part of those "Sayings of Jesus" which are said to have been recorded first by Matthew; — and they may, therefore, have given Matthew's name to this gospel in which they are imbedded, and given it the first place in the New Testament. At any rate, they are the best collection we have, and Dr. Davidson calls them "the most authentic summary of what Jesus taught." To these three chapters, then, criticism sends us for Jesus' most genuine, and the Church for his most religious, teaching, — for a "sermon" is just where he will preach his religion. And here he does preach it. Religion is the theme of these chapters. In them Jesus speaks of God and heaven. He does not, indeed, define God or heaven, — and perhaps teaches thereby that the true sermon should not attempt to. But he tells how to gain heaven, how to see God, how to be saved.

How? Is it by sound theological beliefs? The sermon does not contain a word about the necessity of any such, but sentence after sentence assuring salvation without them. The first verse tells who shall gain "the kingdom of heaven." Who? Not proud priests and dogmatists who claim to have comprehended God and his plans; but "the poor in spirit,"

the humble, modest people. Nor is there any mistake about it, for Jesus goes on to pronounce a blessing on "the meek," who are much like them.

Then he blesses those who "hunger and thirst after"—not theology—but "righteousness"; as if creeds had nothing to do with the case. Nor did he mean hungering after "vicarious righteousness," for in the next sentence he says that men are to be saved for their own goodness: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." God will save for mere kindness of heart, and does not care what theology goes with it.

Then comes a sentence telling who shall be so blessed as to "see God." Is it "professing believers"? No, says Jesus, "the pure in heart";—as if prayer-books in their hands and catechisms in their heads had nothing whatsoever to do with it. Then follows a still higher beatitude, telling who shall have that holiest name of "sons of God." Surely it should be those who show most zeal for sound dogmas! But, no; it is the "peacemakers," the very persons who do not quarrel about dogmas or differences of any kind, but rise above them all into the spirit of brotherhood.

Here, in short, are six beatitudes telling who are to be most "blessed," but without a hint of any

theologic doctrine. A theologian would have made them about the trinity and the atonement, human depravity, and Adam's fall; — but Jesus ignores the whole series. He makes men receive mercy, gain heaven, see God, and become sons of God, without the slightest allusion to "evangelical" doctrines. We might go through the whole sermon with the same result. There is not a suggestion in it that those doctrines are necessary, or of the slightest importance.

Is there any evidence in it that Jesus even believed those doctrines? If he did, he certainly would show it in a sermon. But you cannot find a trace of them. Not even the theologians can find them there, but have to turn away from Jesus to get what they call his teaching. Take, for instance, the Presbyterian "Confession of Faith," and notice how, through its long array of Biblical proof-texts, it avoids these sayings of Jesus. Turn to its important chapter, "Of God and of the Holy Trinity," and you find eighty-one references to the Bible, but not one to Jesus' sermon. Turn to its chapter on man's fall and depravity, and you find sixty-eight proof-texts; but not one of them is from Jesus' sermon. Turn to its vital chapter on "Justification," telling how men are saved. This is exactly what Jesus was talking

about, and his sermon is full of texts. But they do not fit the "Confession," and it passes them by to gather ninety-six elsewhere. It does indeed take one from Jesus' sermon, but apparently by mistake; for this text is from the very passage declaring that all who forgive others shall be forgiven, and hence need no other justification whatsoever! So does this "Confession" seek to show Jesus' teaching by shunning the chief record of it; — as if you should study your Shakespeare by shutting it up. To prove these chief doctrines of Christian theology, it quotes 245 texts from the Bible; — but only one of them is from Jesus' sermon, and that one from a passage denying the doctrine whose proof was sought.

For this sermon not only omits but denies much of the Church teaching. It denies the doctrine of eternal punishment. Although using the terms "hell" and "hell of fire," it certainly did not mean anything like that of the Westminster Confession; — for its command to men to love their enemies, and so become "sons of God," clearly denied that this God would burn his enemies forever, or torture them at all. So that declaration, that all who forgive others will be forgiven of God, denies the doctrine that they will not be forgiven without faith. All the precepts making religion to consist in love deny the doctrine

that it consists in beliefs. They even deny part of Scripture. Jesus' command, "love your enemies," denies a considerable part of the Old Testament; — and he even quotes words from it expressly to contradict them. Your Exodus and Leviticus and Deuteronomy say, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you that ye resist not evil," and, when smitten on one cheek, turn the other. Jesus even denies the common opinions about prayer, and tells men to leave the altar, and first be reconciled to their brethren, as if that were the more important thing. He even tells them not to pray in public: "but thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet," and "shut the door." And instead of urging them even there to repeat liturgies or long prayers of any kind, he tells them not to use "vain repetitions" or "much speaking"; and the prayer he leaves as a model is less than a minute long, with part of that lacking in the oldest manuscripts. He seems to have taught the prayer, not of words, but of life.

How strange, too, are Jesus' teachings about himself in this sermon! There is no word implying that he is a God or even "son of God" in any superhuman sense. Twice, indeed, he uses this term; but in both cases it is to apply it, not to himself, but to others, and to declare that all who love their enemies, and all

peacemakers, "shall be called the sons of God." Nor does he call himself even Christ, or say anything about the Messiah. He does not seem to care for their homage; and expressly says that, not calling him "Lord, Lord," but doing the Father's will, is what is wanted. He does not ask them to use his name in any way; but, rather, he declares that, to many who do use it, and who say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done many wonderful works," he will answer, "I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity." This indifference of Jesus to his own glory gives us new admiration and reverence for him. It is perhaps the most glorious thing recorded of him. It gives us reason to think that he was really so unselfish, so great, so noble, so divine a soul as not to care in the least that men should ever use his name at all.

Finally, what a broad thought of God is found here! He is not only "our Father," but the God of all Nature, who "feedeth" "the fowls of the air" and doth "clothe the grass of the field." But the chief thing Jesus declares of God is his utter impartiality, in which he distributes his blessings upon all men without inquiring what they believe or what they are: "for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

Jesus also cites this impartiality, not merely as a fact, but as the very perfection of God; and he urges men to be as "perfect" and impartial. Herein Jesus teaches a religion, not merely of brotherhood and forgiveness, but wholly divine in its absence of prejudice and its all-embracing charity.

Such is this part of the New Testament which critics call "the most authentic summary of Jesus' teaching," and which the Church consecrates as the one "sermon" that he has left us. What a strange contrast to the teachings of the Church! W. R. Greg declared his "amazement," increasing with every new "perusal of the genuine words and life of Jesus, that out of anything so simple, so beautiful, so just, so loving, and so grand, could have grown up, or been extracted, anything so marvelously unlike its original as the current creeds of Christendom."

Very unlike Christ indeed have been not only the creeds, but the deeds of Christendom. Edmond Kelly, in his recent book, says that, while Justin Martyr's picture of a Church community in the second century was true to Jesus' teaching, from Constantine's day "the Christian Church ceased to be Christian." Where indeed was the Christianity in the wranglings of the Eastern Church for the next

thousand years, or in the persecutions and wars of the Western still later? How conspicuous was it in the times of the Reformation, on either side? Luther said if Christ should come back to earth, "without doubt the Pope would crucify him again"; and often afterward the Pope might have returned the same compliment to the Protestants.

A somewhat sarcastic observer, when asked if Christianity had been a successful experiment, said it had not been tried yet; — and how much indeed has it been tried in modern times? The French girl, reading about the brotherly and beautiful life of the early Church, said: "Mama, in what country do the Christians live? Let us go and live in a Christian country!" She did not find it in Catholic France. She would hardly have found it in Protestant England. Carlyle grimly said you might fire a pistol through a church there without any danger of hitting a Christian. Ruskin accused even the clergy of this defection from Christ. He said that, during thirty years' attendance at church, he "never heard one preacher deal faithfully with the question between God and mammon"; and that the very bishops, with the exception of the heretic Colenso, had "forfeited and fallen from their bishoprics by transgression and betrayal of their Lord." He said English churchmen did not

try to keep even the Decalogue, but only to have it "said every Sunday, and a little agreeable tune on the organ played after every clause"; — while, in practice, they treated it as "the ten crotchets of Moses," and went "with armed steamers up and down the China seas, selling opium at the cannon's mouth, and altering the highwayman's 'Your money or your life!' into 'Your money and your life!'" Ruskin took his illustration from the opium trade, — for England had not then sunk to the Boer war.

In the same spirit, our American poet Lowell wrote: "The Church has corrupted Christianity. We are still Huns and Vandals at heart. We have carved a cross upon our altars; — but the smoke of our sacrifice goes up to Thor and Odin still." Lowell afterward wrote to Longfellow that Christ was "against the Christianity of the world, and it must go down"; and Thoreau said the only way to understand Christ was to get rid of Christianity. John Wilkes, from whom the Wilkesites were named, said, in view of their errors, that he was not a Wilkesite; and one suspects that often, in the last fifteen hundred years, if Christ had been on earth, he would have said he was not a Christian.

Not that I would charge the Church especially with disobeying Christ; — for others have done it no less.

But the Church makes that disobedience worse by its doctrines about him. It disobeys him, while at the same time it deifies him. It declares him supreme Deity, yet treats his teachings as folly and falsehood. It says we must believe that Christ was "very God," but we need not obey him. We must believe that he was "very God of very God"; but we shall have to disobey him, to keep the respect of Christendom. For, though his commands about property are infallible, still, if you follow them, even the Church will call you a fool. Though his commands about brotherhood are divine, still, if you apply them in our dealings with other nations, even the clergy will call you a traitor. They say he ordered us to love our enemies; but we will loot them. He ordered us to offer the cheek to those who have smitten us; but we will bombard and blow into shreds those who have not smitten us. He ordered us to forgive the offender 490 times; but we will not forgive those whose only offense is in defending their own lands and homes. As a result, we send an army to some foreign land, where it has no more moral right to be than a Russian army has to be in Minnesota; we brand as "rebels" those who try to protect their wives and daughters against us; we burn their towns and butcher their children; — and then, if there are

any left, we send missionaries to teach them that it was a "very God" who forbade all these things.

A leading writer not long since said that if Jesus could have foreseen on the cross the deeds that his professed followers were going to do in his name, "it would have been more cruel to his tender soul than the thorns wherewith his enemies crowned him." Certainly he has been, and still is, crucified worse than on Calvary, and buried deeper than any sepulcher. I too have kept Good Friday and Passion Week, — and kept them every week in the year for several years. I have kept them, however, not so much for any brief crucifixion by ancient unbelievers, as for Christ's long and continued crucifixion by Christendom itself; not for any harmless burial in Gethsemane, from which he rose right away, but for this far sadder burial of centuries, from which he has not risen yet, and from which there is so little sign that the Church even wants him to rise.

But all true souls will desire his resurrection and reign. For our study has shown that Jesus was better and nobler and greater than creeds have ever told, and his teachings more reasonable and religious. Not that they were the teachings of him alone. Most of them were already familiar in his nation, and many of them

in other religions and literatures. But not the less do we owe him for gathering these golden truths, for refining and coining them into sentences to circulate through the centuries. Not the less do we owe for his life and character, which were still more powerful sentences, perpetuating themselves through the souls and lives of his true followers.

Reading Jesus' story rationally, and seeing, through all its distortions, his spirit of peace, forgivenesss, and love, we can indeed crown him as a Messiah, a man divinely anointed for the salvation of many. Using that other title, too, in a higher sense than the Church has given it, — using it in the same sense which he gave it, — we must pronounce him pre-eminently a "son of God." And, using the thought given by the highest philosophy, — and by the apostle's affirmation that "if we love one another, God dwelleth in us,"— we shall conclude that Jesus was indeed divine, and that he taught how all men may become so.

VARIOUS MEANINGS OF EASTER

VARIOUS MEANINGS OF EASTER

"WHAT right have you heathen to keep Easter?" said a good churchman to a heretic. But the heathen seem to have a better right than the Church. Easter is not exclusively Christian, and originally was not Christian at all. The word does not appear in the Old Testament or the New, nor in Church literature until rather late; and, when appearing, was only borrowed from the heathen. The celebration, too, was partly borrowed from northern Europe. Long before the Teutonic peoples accepted Christianity, or even heard of it, they kept their Easter festival; kept it under the same name, and with many of the same customs as now. It was not only a pagan festival, but in honor of a pagan goddess of spring; and our word Easter is the name of that goddess. The Church took the festival, gave it the new and Christian meaning of the paschal feast, and tried to purge it of its paganism. But the latter was so established, and has so survived, that even the pagan name remains; and the Christian

preacher cannot so much as pronounce the word Easter without proclaiming that the heathen have an older and better claim to it than himself.

But even older than this worship of Easter as goddess of spring was another and still wider adoration of her as goddess of the morning and of the *dawn*. This meaning is told in her very name, in most of the Indo-European languages. Even in our own language, the root of Easter is *east*, the place of the dawn; and in nearly all the languages of northern Europe the words for Easter come from an old root meaning the dawn. The same is seen no less in the more southern literatures and languages of Europe and Asia, although in them the root did not take that final sound of *t* which it added in the north. In the Greek, instead of our east, we have *Eos*, with the same meaning of the dawn and the goddess of the dawn. She is very familiar in Homer and Hesiod, — the rosy-fingered Eos, coming in radiant robes to bring the morning light to gods and men. In the legends, she is closely connected with the various phenomena of the morning sky, being daughter of Hyperion (the heavens), sister of the sun, and mother of the morning breezes; and she is often figured, on ancient Greek gems and vases, driving her chariot before the rising sun and sprinkling the earth with the morning

dew. Such was the goddess of the dawn in classic Greek, — Eos, whose name still sounds in our east and Easter.

In the older Greek dialects she was called, the etymologists say, by the slightly different names of Auos and *Ausos*. The latter is especially interesting as the connecting link with her old Latin name, on one side, and with Sanscrit, on the other. For this Ausos is the same as the Sanscrit *Ushas*, the goddess of the dawn in the Vedic songs of ancient India. To this goddess those poetic and pious old Hindus kindled their morning fires, made their morning sacrifices, sang many a morning psalm of praise ; and Professor Whitney says "the hymns to Ushas are among the finest of the Vedas." They praised her as the immortal "daughter of the sky," old yet forever young, reborn in beauty every day, — smiling "mother of the morning," coming with "thy radiant face and luster of thy golden hair" to drive away the darkness and its dangers, and to arouse all creatures to the works and joys of another day. This was the original Easter worship, — the daily thanks, praise, and adoration for the dawn.

In that Sanscrit name, *Ushas*, we also reach the root and earliest known meaning of the word, — *Ush* and *Us*, — meaning flame, and still heard in the Latin

ustio, a burning, and in the English "ustion" and "combustion" and "combustible," and various kindred words. From that root, meaning flame, all the names of Easter have come. The Sanscrit *Ushas* and Greek *Ausos* simply double it and apply it to the flaming sky of the dawn and to the goddess there seen.

From the same Ausos, lengthened into Ausosa, came the Latin *Aurora*, who holds the same place in Roman mythology. As Aurora, she has become still more familiar than Eos in modern literature, — sung in English by Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Landor, and others. She has also reached much prominence in modern art. Burckhart calls Guido Reni's picture of her "the most perfect painting of the last two hundred years," and Hawthorne said it seemed painted "with the morning sunshine which it represents"; — though Taine prefers Guercino's Aurora, with its frolicking girls in front of her extinguishing the stars, and its Cupids tending the drapery and garland and flowers for her to scatter. For flowers, too, were connected with Aurora, — from early pictures, down to Hamon's graceful girl sipping dew from the morning-glory.

But in the northern languages, that same root *Aus* added the sound of *t* or *tr*. In this form it left the same name of the dawn in a score of tongues and

dialects, — from the Lettic *aust* in Russia, across Europe and the ocean to the Icelandic *austr;* from the German and Norse *ost* and *ostr,* to the Anglo-Saxon *êâst* and the English *east* and *Easter.* It was the same word, heard with slight changes, in the worship of Scandinavians and Germans and Lithuanians, of Romans and Greeks and Asiatics, back to the old Vedas. Among all, too, it included the same religious meaning, the same glad thanks and praise for the dawn of a new day. This meaning, indeed, long survived even in the Christian Easter; and E. B. Tylor told how, only a generation ago, the peasants of Saxony and Brandenburg and northern Germany still climbed the hilltops on Easter morning to watch for the dawn, and built their bonfires to it, as they did in heathen Hellas and ancient India in honor of the same goddess, Eos or Ausos or Ushas.

That old worship is now dead; and not only in English, but in most of the northern languages, that old name of the deified dawn has come to mean mainly the place where she appeared, — a mere point of the compass. But the poet and the scholar cannot speak that word "east" without remembering the time when east was Easter, too, — when the eastern sky was all alive with the presence of a glorious goddess, robed in gold and purple, and radiant with beauty,

as she rose to wake the world and call mankind to their morning worship.

That worship is one still worth commemorating on Easter day. It helps the feeling of charity and human brotherhood to remember how all these scores of peoples, from Iceland back to India, have shared in the same worship, and still preserve its words with so little change in their divers languages. The Church once had a long and bitter quarrel and division over the Easter question. But the word itself rebukes such division, telling how the worshipers, not only of the Christian Jesus, but of the Roman Jove and the Greek Apollo, and of many heathen gods, from the Norse Odin to the Vedic Indra, — have all been allied, speaking the same language, feeling the same religion of thanks for the morn and of praise for its Maker. For certainly this feeling was just as religious under a Greek or a German name, as under a Jewish.

Indeed, those pagan songs in praise of the god of the sunrise were quite like the familiar Hebrew Psalm, "The heavens declare the glory of God," and "in them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, that cometh forth like a bridegroom from his chamber, and rejoiceth like a strong man to run his course." That pagan adoration of the dawn was not very different from Job's, telling how the same "day-spring" know-

eth its place; — and the old Latin Bible, the Vulgate, even renders this day-spring "Aurora." The pagan praise of the blessings and beauty of the dawn was far more religious than the medieval catechism which taught that its ruddy colors were the reflection from the flames of hell below the horizon, and than the modern confession of faith which accuses God of punishing most of mankind in them. Jesus himself rebuked such thought, and took the dawn to illustrate the impartiality and perfection of the heavenly Father who "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good."

Not only was that adoration of the dawn religious, but the poet still partakes in it. Nor can the most prosaic or pessimistic soul fail to feel some joyous wonder and worship at the coming of the sunrise, — when suddenly, as W. W. Story sang:

"There's a sparkle o'er leagues of seas,
There's a rustle through miles of trees,
Life returns and the earth rejoices,
The air is astir with the murmur of voices;
There's the low of a thousand herds
Feeding on fertile meadows;
There's the joy of a myriad birds
Darting through leafy shadows.
Night with its shadow of death is done; —
The great new wondrous day has begun."

And though we may no longer see in the radiant colors of the dawn the wondrous robes of a goddess, yet even science has revealed greater wonders in the light that wove them. This light shoots its ceaseless shuttles through millions of miles, swifter than any goddess of old legend; and, with the mere waves of ether for its loom, threads through the warp of mist and haze to make that brilliant and ever changing web, new every morning and fresh every evening. In this wondrous weaving, science has shown a new revelation of the God of the Psalmist, "who coverest thyself with light as with a garment, who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain." We feel this God still here, too, and can sing the modern hymn:

> "Still, still with thee, when purple morning breaketh,
> When the bird waketh and the shadows flee;—
> Fairer than morning, lovelier than the daylight,
> Dawns the sweet consciousness, I am with thee."

It is the same power which those old Vedic worshipers sang in their morning hymns, and which Greek and Roman poets praised in their radiant Eos and golden-haired Aurora. We can still keep that original Easter-worship of the goddess of Dawn.

But this Easter in time took another meaning. She became the goddess, not merely of the morning,

and dawn of a new light, but of the *spring*, and dawn of a new life in Nature. The change was natural, for the two events are parallel. Their likeness is told even in our language. The word for dawn in old English, and in our English Bibles, is "day-spring," — the spring of the day, corresponding to the year-spring. One means the rising of the sun from the unseen sky to reach our horizon, and the other its rising from the southern sky to reach our own hemisphere at the vernal equinox. One means the resurrection of Nature from the darkness and death of night, to the light and life of morning; the other means its resurrection from the worse death of winter, to the warmth and life of May. So the same Easter who had brought the resurrection of the day came to be represented as bringing this resurrection of the year. In the latter, as in the former, she was rightly figured as a goddess, clothed in beauty. Still better than in her fleeting robes of the morning sky, she now wove a more real robe for the earth itself, clothing fields and forests in foliage for the whole season, and embroidering it with flowers that kept their colors when the hues of dawn had disappeared.

Naturally too, this new meaning of Easter appears especially in the northern nations, where winter was so much more severe and the resurrection from it so

much more welcome. So while southern peoples adored her chiefly in the dawn, this older meaning was largely forgotten among the Teutonic races, and she became almost entirely the goddess of spring. At this season they kept her festival with fit offerings of flowers and seeds and various emblems of the new life of Nature, together with the many joyous customs telling of the gladness that it brought. Such was the Easter which the Christian church found established among those northern heathen, and to which it added the meaning of Jesus' resurrection and the paschal feast.

But even that *paschal feast* seems to have had originally a somewhat similar meaning. It came from the Hebrew passover, which is regarded by many scholars as having been at first a mere festival in honor of spring. It was dated by the spring equinox, when the Hebrews, like so many other peoples, began their new year. Even its Hebrew name, *Pesach*, meaning a passing, is regarded by many as referring to the sun then passing the equator to the northern heavens and the new year, — just as we still speak of its "crossing the line." Like the heathen Easter, this great Hebrew festival was kept with spring offerings of different kinds, — not so much, however, from the fields as from the flocks, as was natural in their ancient

pastoral life. The chief offerings were of course of the new lambs, each family slaying and eating its own with grateful joy; and Josephus says that in his time two hundred and fifty thousand were so slain at a passover. Their blood was from of old sprinkled on the door-posts of the houses at this beginning of the year, probably for its supposed purifying and protecting influence, as was the custom of so many ancient peoples. But in the course of centuries, this spring festival of the Hebrews lost its original meaning, and came to be interpreted as commemorating that chief event in their traditions, the deliverance from Egypt. It came to be thought that the eating of the lamb commemorated the last supper before their departure; and that the name of the feast referred to the legend of the Lord passing over the houses where the blood was sprinkled.

So every spring, that equinoctial month became doubly sacred; and in the middle of the month, at its full moon, the Jews kept their great feast of the passover, — their *Pesach*, which became *Pascha* in the Greek. And, one year, in that paschal week, Jesus is said to have been slain; — his death occurring, according to the first three gospels, the day after the feast, — or on the day of the feast, according to the fourth. Hence the first day of the following week

came at length to be kept in the Church as the festival of his resurrection.

This was the new meaning which the Christian Church added to the old heathen festival of Easter, and which has become its chief meaning in Christendom. Every year, at the first full moon after the sun reaches the vernal equinox, the Jews still keep their ancient passover. And the next Sunday, the Christians keep Easter, — but with its old meanings largely forgotten. They feel no excessive sympathy for the Jews, whose holy week underlies the Christian. They keep many customs of the older festival of spring, but with no sympathy for the heathen religions that made so much of it; while they ignore the original meaning of Easter as an adoration of the divine power in the dawn. They make it mainly, and often almost solely, a commemoration of Jesus and his resurrection.

Would it not be better to keep all these meanings and celebrate all these resurrections? We have seen how full of marvel and beauty is the first, — the resurrection of the "day-spring" from the darkness and death of night. No less so is the second, — the resurrection of the year-spring from the death of winter. Here is something diviner than the Hebrew deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. Quite as marvel-

ous as and far more beneficent than Moses' rod waved over the waters to turn them into blood, or raised to drown the Egyptians, are the rods on every tree raising the waters for the leaves and life of another season. The God of the world is delivering, not merely one people, but all nations and Nature from the bondage of death. In swelling bud and seed, the God of Nature is providing a paschal feast for all communicants, Christian and pagan, and for all creatures, — with a divine impartiality which makes our creeds seem cruel and profane in comparison. And the natural feelings of gratitude and joy with which we greet these miracles are quite as religious as any ancient ceremonies. When a little girl once jubilantly brought me a green grass-blade plucked from beneath the melting snow, it seemed just as much a worship, and the same worship, as when the ancient Israelites brought their spring offerings to the altar. Our natural delight in the spring blossoms and singing of the birds is a better worship than any animal sacrifice, and is far better than any belief that the Lord has demanded the blood of his own son. We may well celebrate this Easter resurrection of life.

We may well commemorate the resurrection of Jesus, too. Not necessarily the resurrection of his dead body, which not even Paul seems ever to have

believed; but his spiritual resurrection, greater than Paul taught. For Jesus' spiritual influence and power has lived far longer than the disciples thought the world was going to, and has spread through wide lands whose existence they never dreamed of. His words are read around the world every day, and something of his spirit survives with them. For though Christendom has often by its doctrines denied him worse than Peter did, and by its cruelties crucified him over and over again; though it has often laid him in the sepulcher and sealed the door until resurrection seemed impossible; — still his spirit has survived through all, and has ever been going forth, like his rising in the story, to inspire deeds of love, and to work on with an undying life that makes the story of his bodily resurrection seem of no account in comparison.

The same is true of countless others, in various degrees. John Brown's body lay a-mouldering in the ground, but his soul went marching on; — has been ever since, and will for centuries to come. Theodore Parker, when dying in Florence, said, "You may bury me here, but the true Theodore Parker is in Boston, and will live and grow there"; — and he has lived and grown in many other towns. Heber Newton tells how, after a memorable Easter service in Westminster Abbey, he went forth feeling that England's great

dead were not sleeping there in their tombs, "waiting for the archangel's trump, but that in the living civilization they lived on, immortally alive." Of common people, too, he said: "A sainted mother, a noble father, a mated soul torn from the side, a child whom men call dead, walk before us, leading us by the hand. Our best influences flow from them; our highest aspirations they waken in us."

That is the resurrection that most appeals to my feelings, as the best. That seems to me much the noblest and most desirable survival; — to live on as a joyous memory and influence in the hearts and lives of friends and acquaintances; to be

> "Of those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence, live
> In pulses stirred to generosity,
> In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
> For miserable aims that end with self";

and so

> "to join the choir invisible
> Whose music is the gladness of the world."

Nor does this thought at all deny that personal resurrection which is the theme of most Easter sermons. That is not denied by science itself; — and even if it were, might still be true. For science is not infallible, but, as Holmes said of chemistry, is ever "spoiling on

our hands." We have heard of the book which proved by exact science that no steamer could cross the Atlantic, but was afterward brought across in one, — and brought to a continent whose very existence both science and religion had denied. So if science should prove that the soul cannot cross the ocean of death, it might still cross, and find a solider continent than religion ever told.

But science has not so proved. Even Huxley said that science had found nothing new to say against immortality, and many a scientist has told us that in the nature of things it never can. On this question, science is only agnostic. It is even better than agnostic, by showing such miraculous powers in Nature. Though arousing doubts of what is not seen, it has more than met those doubts by asserting unseen things all about us, more active than the seen. It tells of germs never seen, yet real as rocks, and sure of resurrection. It says these germs are made of atoms a thousand times finer still, — yet substantial as the sun, and more enduring than the stars.

It even shows things growing more active as they become unseen. The apostle compared life to a vapor vanishing away; but vapor proves to be the most powerful form of matter, and vanishing to be a sign of vigor. Even gunpowder can do nothing until

vanishing in vapor, and the cannon-ball is harmless until it gets a gas behind it, — the more smokeless and invisible the surer. Air is invisible vapor; yet it builds the forests, and can blow them down, or pick up a town in a tornado. Water must put on utter invisibility in the boiler before it can draw the train. Still more active does it become when dissolved into its elements, — and one of those invisible hydrogen atoms, as some scientists describe it, is about the liveliest thing in the universe. The celestial ether, according to modern theory, is rather the nearest to nothing of all existences, yet the most energetic. Matter seems to grow vigorous by vanishing, and to be most active when on the edge of annihilation. This evidence of things growing active as they slip beyond the reach of sense and of science tells us not to be alarmed because we cannot follow a man after death.

Especially when we remember that we have never been able to find him before death! For this human spirit, with all its powers, is yet airier than ether, more invisible than any atom, found by neither lens nor logic, eluding physics and metaphysics alike, so that even Tyndall said it is no more understood to-day than before science began. Yet it is the solidest and surest thing on earth, mastering everything else.

Nor need we be alarmed because it now seems so dependent on body, or even produced by brain. So is every seed dependent on and produced by its parent plant, yet leaves it for a larger life. Spirit gets along without much body even now; and Sydney Smith told of the gifted little Englishman who didn't have body enough to cover his mind, but went about with his intellect improperly exposed. Spirit shines in diseased bodies, — from the paralyzed Heine producing all those poems from his "mattress grave," to the two American geniuses who had "only one lung between them." It is active in sleeping bodies; from Coleridge, who composed his finest poem in a dream, to the many cases where sleeping men have solved problems and written arguments as they could not in waking hours. It is active even in dying bodies. Indeed, we are dying all the while, the doctors say; — have had our bodies destroyed several times already, and would have been in our graves long ago but for this constant destruction that keeps us alive.

As Emerson was not alarmed because the world was going to end the next week, but said we could get along better without it, so perhaps we can without this muddy "vesture of decay" which grossly hems us in. Alfred de Musset, praising the soul's infinite superiority to a piano of Erard or violin of Stradi-

varius, said life might be but the opening bar of the melody, or even but the tuning of the instrument. Science itself is full of hints of unseen worlds. Cyrus Field tells of the night when, after weeks of searching in mid-ocean for that broken cable, the grapnel finally caught it. Slowly from the sea-bottom, miles beneath, they lifted it hour after hour, and at last drew it to the deck. They could hardly trust their eyes, but crept to feel it and make sure, — while strong men wept and the midnight darkness was rent with cheers and rockets. Even then they feared the cable was broken somewhere else in its long course to land. But at length their tests were answered by a feeble spark flashed from a key a thousand miles away, assuring them that the line was sound ; and soon there came a message telling him of the safety of the dear ones he had left by the Hudson.

We and our earth float like a ship on the mysterious sea of being, whose depths the grapnel of science does not sound, and we cannot expect to find a solid line of logic connecting with an unseen world. But there still flash at times, through feelings stronger than cables and diviner than electric currents, intimations that vanished souls are on solider ground than we, and that all are safe in the eternal Law and Love.

"A thread of Law runs through our prayer,
Stronger than iron cables are;
And love and longing towards her goal
Are pilots sweet to guide the soul.

"For Life must live, and Soul must sail,
And Unseen over seen prevail;
And all God's argosies come to shore,
Let ocean smile, or rage, or roar."

THE NEW YEAR OF RELIGION

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ALL life has its *seasons*, its springs and falls. Even lifeless movement shows something similar, in the rise and fall of its rhythmic waves. These are found everywhere, from the ripples of the pond and billows of the wheatfield in the breeze, to the unseen waves of sound in the air and of light in the ether. There are tides, too, not only in the sea, but in the periodic winds, — even in the sunlight with its daily ebb and flow, and in the life of the field ebbing in autumn and swelling in spring. Everywhere are seasons, from these of the year, to the vast ones of geologic story, whose days were millenniums and whose winters were long glacial ages.

The same principle prevails in society. Trade has its tides of inflation and depression, slow, but sure as those of the sea. The records of industries, prices, wages, even crimes, when reduced to diagrams, always show series of waves. The same principle is seen in each person; — from the pulse-beats in his blood, and ebb and flow of his breath, to his alternations of sleep

and waking, and of toil and rest when awake. It is seen also in his mental and moral life, — fertile thought being followed by fatigue, and every enthusiasm by a reaction. It is seen no less in his religion. Even sanctity has its tides. Robert Collyer used to tell how a devoted minister, when asked at his ordination if he was eager to save sinners, frankly replied that he sometimes was, but sometimes did not care if Satan got them all. The Methodist theory of backslidings and revivals is quite scientific. Religion, like all life, has its noons and nights, its growing Aprils and drying autumns, its summers of warm devotion and its winters of freezing doubt and denial.

But beneath these fluctuations are far larger ones, where the seasons are centuries. John Stuart Mill divided religious history into long "organic periods" of growth and long "critical periods" of negation. He said such an organic period was seen in Greek and Roman polytheism, and was followed by a critical one under the philosophers. He said another organic period came with Christianity and lasted until the Reformation; — when another critical period began, which has lasted ever since. Mr. Mill's "periods" are but the alternating seasons of religion's life, — the summer and winter of that Power with whom "a thousand years are as one day." It was indeed a

fertile summer when the Greek religion bore its luxuriant foliage of fancies and legends, and its more lasting fruit in temples, statues, and poems never since surpassed. It was another summer when Christianity leaved out in new beliefs and customs, and blossomed in beautiful churches which bore so many fruits.

That summer lasted many centuries. It was not only fertile with growth, but warm with fervent faith and often fiery zeal. Its zeal inspired men not only to build majestic cathedrals among their own hovels, but to fight against heathen and heretics, and to die for their church as they would for their wives and children. Its faith filled the people and made them sure their doctrines would last forever. The Athanasian creed calmly condemned to perdition all who would not believe it, and the Church dogmas long kept their freshness not only in Catholic, but in Protestant lands. Even Milton wrote of Adam's fall as a historic fact, no more to be doubted than Cromwell's deeds. Depravity and damnation seemed as sure. "The one supreme poem of Puritan New England," as our historian terms it, was Wigglesworth's "Day of Doom" which consigned to everlasting punishment even infants who died before they reached the cradle. Lowell tells how this poem was read and learned and sung, —"the solace of every fireside";

and Cotton Mather predicted that its popularity would continue until the judgment-day itself. So little thought was there that the theological foliage of that long summer could ever fall or fade.

But it had to. It could no more last forever than can July. The autumnal air of cool criticism came to kill whatever could not withstand it, and many a medieval doctrine withered and died. That so popular poem, which was to flourish till "the day of doom," has fallen into such oblivion that it is now hard to find; and its teachings have become so repugnant that many a preacher says they were never taught. "Paradise Lost" is read no longer for its theology, but only for its poetry, and many so dislike its theology that they cannot see the poetry, "Adam's fall" is nearly forgotten, and to many Christians Adam himself has become more mythical than Admetus. That Athanasian creed is condemned by half the Church. Even the Westminster Confession has seen a large part of its professors eager to revise it; and many who objected did so from the foresight that revision would leave so little of it. With this disuse of dogmas has also come that of various observances.

Of course, this doctrinal and ritual foliage has not fallen everywhere. In many a retired garden and church conservatory it is kept still fresh. But, where

freely exposed to the open air of thought, much of it has withered. Poetic people have continued to see beauty in it, as they do in the October foliage; and many seek to preserve it, like colored leaves upon their walls, — but for ornament rather than real use. Coarser men, however, have seen no attraction in these falling forms, but have rudely trampled them under foot and rejoiced in their rustling. Some have boyishly sought to make a huge halloween bonfire of them all. And not only has so much of the religious foliage fallen, but the air has lost its emotional warmth, and sometimes sends the more mercurial spirits among us down to zero and below. The *winter* season of religion has arrived.

Nor can we escape it. These changes are something which we cannot stop, any more than we can stop the sinking of the sun in the sky. Many preachers tell us to cling to the old beliefs, and not let them go. They might as well tell us not to let the leaves go from our maples in November. Our wills have little to do with the process. When the sap of sincere thought and feeling ceases to circulate through any Church doctrines or ceremonies, they might as well drop. We may cling to them, as many a tree does to its dead leaves; but they do not help us, and their rustle is not religion. Real religion must have life

and sincerity; and, when the winter comes, we may as well admit it.

We may even welcome it, for it comes for good. We do not want hot summer all the year. A season of it is necessary; but, if prolonged, it becomes unhealthy. In religion, as in life, autumn is wanted to check disease, and winter to kill its germs more completely and to brace our systems to a higher health. Warm seasons of feeling, and even hotter days of fervor, are helpful to religious growth; but, if too long, they weaken us, and breed fevers in our souls and all sorts of spiritual epidemics in society. The emotional needs to be followed by an intellectual revival, excitement by cool criticism, and fervor by a touch of frost, to check the fevers that summer has started. Warm feeling is indispensable for softening us, but so are the cooling breezes of free thought for bracing us up. Revival-meetings are good in their place, but so are science and skepticism in theirs. In religion, as in the calendar, spring and fall are alike natural and necessary; and January is just as divine as June.

So it has proved in history. The medieval midsummer of devotion and zeal, however serviceable to religion, was no more so than the subsequent November season of skepticism. For zeal, — like the fire

which typifies it, — though a most blessed thing, needs most of all things to be wisely controlled, or it will burn us up. Indeed, that old Church zeal did burn altogether too much. It set hearts on fire, not only with love for their own doctrines, but with hate for all others. It made men eager to burn, not only the hated doctrines, but the people who held them. And it would have gone on burning, had not criticism come, like autumnal rains, to put out the fires. Those eighteenth-century skeptics who so chilled Church zeal by their free use of reason and ridicule, by that same process put an end to intolerances and inhumanities which the Church had allowed for centuries, and some of which it had established. Even Voltaire did so good a work in this way that Lecky said he had done "more to destroy the greatest of human curses than any other of the sons of men." So Lowell said of him, "We owe half our freedom now to the leering old mocker." Even Professor Jowett, as twice recorded in his biography, said, "Voltaire has done more good than all the Fathers of the Church put together." In view of all that skepticism has done to overthrow intolerance and bring a larger charity, we ought not to complain of its low temperature, but give thanks for the winter, too, however much it may have weakened the religious life.

Nor has it weakened the real religious life, but proved its permanence and power. Even vegetable life is not lost in winter, but only withdrawn from the surface to show its endurance better than in other seasons. The leaves fostered by the June sun are no such proof of vitality as are the little buds safely facing the December storms. The fruits swelling in the summer days are no such proof as are the minute seeds blown about for months amid the snows, or locked in frozen soil, but only to start again into new shoots. It is the winter rather than the summer that tells the strength of vegetable life.

In like manner the religious life is shown better in its critical January than in its credulous June. Religion flowering in churches and fruiting in deeds of devotion, when its midsummer faith forced it into activity, did not begin to show its strength so well as when — though stripped of its old forms and faith — it still kept its real life of righteousness and love. It would seem easy for men to be saints when they had those medieval fears and hopes to help them. But were they any more saintly than the skeptics themselves? Contrasting the two, Macaulay says, "On one side was a Church boasting of the purity of a doctrine derived from the apostles, but disgraced by the massacre of Saint Bartholomew: on the other

side was a sect laughing at the Scriptures, shooting out the tongue at the sacraments, but ready to encounter principalities and powers in the cause of justice, mercy, and toleration." In these essential things the skeptics appeared the more religious of the two. And, since then, how many men called infidels have still been leading saintly lives, unhelped by the forms or faith of the Church; — fighting wrong, not from fear of hell, but because it was wrong; doing right, not from hope of heaven, but because it was right; living the real religion of righteousness! If religion means "to do justly and to love mercy," to help others "in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world," then it has counted many of its best saints among men who have dropped old liturgies and beliefs. The falling of these leaves has only shown how deeply the real religion was rooted. The winter has not harmed, but proved, the religious life.

It will even lead to an increase of that life, — just as the annual winter is the passage to a larger growth. As at the base of every fallen leaf lies a bud waiting to grow into a new branch; so beneath every fallen doctrine lay a truth waiting to unfold into larger doctrines. This is already seen, and everywhere wise preachers are proclaiming a larger faith. Mr. Savage's

famous sermon, "What o'clock is it in Religion?" well shows how the old ideas of the universe and man and God are giving way to better, and concludes that it is the morning of a new day. Changing the figure, we would say that it is the beginning of a *new religious year*, which shall see, not merely the coming of new light, but growth of life. In religion, as in the January sky, the sun is starting for a new summer.

It has indeed long since started, and made much advance from its *solstice*. That lowest solstice in religion was reached more than a hundred years ago, and since then the whole tendency has changed. Toward the close of the eighteenth century, intellectual men were wont to glory in the name "infidel" and even "atheist." In a company of eighteen distinguished men at Baron d'Holbach's dinner in Paris, when one said he doubted if any thinker could seriously call himself an atheist, the host replied: "My dear sir, you are now sitting at table with seventeen such." It was often said an honest man must be either an atheist or a fool. Even a deist was defined as "a man who has not lived long enough to become an atheist." Macaulay says "it was as necessary to the character of an accomplished man that he should despise the religion of his country as that he should know

his letters." Such was the condition in much of Christendom. Then was the December solstice of religion.

But since then religion has been rising and returning, like the January sun. Nor has it been rising merely to repeat a former season, but for the *larger life* of a new one. The signs of this growth are already seen in the broader thoughts on all subjects. Ideas of Nature have enlarged; and, instead of a little world made in a week, we see an infinite creation filling all time. Ideas of man have changed; and, instead of his fatal fall and almost universal perdition, we see his rise, proving his worth and promise. Ideas of God have enlarged; and, instead of a limited person with human passions and partiality, we see a far diviner Power pervading all nations and Nature. Ideas of Providence have broadened; and, instead of occasional miracles to help a few men, we see the infinite miracle of universal laws forever helping all. Old ideas of inspiration have widened; and, instead of a few ancient prophets and one sacred book, we see the same inspiration working everywhere through human reason and conscience, making all good literature and lives an unending Revelation. Old ideas of Christianity have enlarged; and we see that the goodness which was divine in Jesus is just as divine wherever found, and

that the incarnation has been shown in innumerable men, since every one "that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

This larger faith does indeed bring a new day in religion, and outshines the old doctrines as sunrise does the morning star. But it comes more like a new year, to bring life as well as light, to melt old animosities in a larger charity, and to warm souls to a higher growth. We may not yet feel its warmth. Like the January sun, it still lies low in the sky, not yet shedding heat in our hearts, but only shining on our minds with wintry rays. But, like that, it will rise ever higher, until we not only see its splendor, but feel its warmth. It will become not merely a truth convincing the intellect, but a feeling kindling the soul. Winter will yield to spring; and the thoughts that only sparkle now, like snow in the sun, will warm and rise and flow in the circulation and life of a new summer.

But that summer is still far away, and will be slow in coming. Doubtless much cold weather is yet awaiting us. Hence the practical question is what to do with it. Most animals avoid the winter, some migrating to warmer climes, some seeking holes in which to hibernate. But man faces it out, and often makes it

the busiest and best season of the year. So, in religion, some souls, frightened by the wintry temperature of thought, migrate to more tropical churches; while some retire from religious life altogether, and, like the gophers, settle into a state of hibernation and spiritual torpor, without even any hope of coming out of it. But manlier souls say, "We will face the winter out, and make the best of it, doing what we can to keep ourselves and others warm."

But how shall this be done? Some would war against the cold. It seems such a positive force, bursting vessels, killing men, covering lakes with ice, creating glaciers that carve the very mountains and carry them over the continents. But the physicists tell us it is not positive at all, — a mere negation, a minus quantity. Heat is the positive thing, and cold is only the absence of it. Of course, this seems a useless distinction; for a freezing man finds no comfort in the thought that he is being killed by a mere negation. Still, the distinction has some practical value. For, cold being a nothing, we learn to waste no time warring against it, but simply to seek heat. So in religion we need wage no war either with negative indifference, or with empty dogmas and hollow forms. A hole in the lawn is removed, not by trying to cart it away, but by filling it up. The religious

cold is a void to be filled, — and all that we need is to bring the warmth.

But how shall we get it? The true way would seem to be to go nearer to the sun, and to the truth which it symbolizes. But, practically, this method does not succeed. We climb a mountain toward the sun only to grow colder, and shiver on its summit, while people a mile below are broiling. The aeronaut soars still higher, only to freeze. If our heat does come from the sun, we get it reflected from the earth and bathing us in the lower air. So spiritual warmth is found, not by philosophers climbing the mountain-heights of thought or soaring upward in search of truth, but by the people who keep close to the interests of earthly life. If it does come from above, it reaches us through human hearts; and those living in the humblest valleys get most of it. The sparkling peaks of speculation look beautiful from below, but are icy and slippery when reached, — not a pleasant place to live. Religious warmth comes not by climbing the heights of truth, but by keeping close to human life and human hearts.

We are near enough to truth at any time, and only need to keep the right attitude toward it. Winter is just the season when we are nearest the sun, they say; — but we are cold because our zone has turned

its face away from him. We are some three millions of miles further from him in summer; — yet have grown warm by facing him more directly. So in the wintry period of criticism, we are nearer the truth than at any other time; but we miss its warmth because we are searching it with the intellect rather than turning hearts and lives toward it with devotion. It is not the nearness, but the devoted attitude, that brings summer to the soul. And if we would take that attitude to-day, it would add warmth to the religious winter, — just as even January becomes quite comfortable on the southern slope of a hill.

But even on that slope a house is needed. So, in the religious winter, people need the shelter of *association* and organization. Liberal people need it more than others, since they live in higher altitudes. Strong souls may indeed go without such help; — and Emerson reminds us that Milton, the most religious man of his time, attended no church. But most people who try such independence lose by it, — like the hermit who spends the winter in the wilderness. Among those who are living without the help of association, many seem to have caught cold from the exposure and to be far gone in spiritual consumption. It is good to have church homes. It is good to warm them with something besides our own natural heat.

Just as we warm our houses by the wood that grew in former summers, or the coal from still more torrid ages; — so we need to warm our hearts, not merely by our own thoughts and feelings, but also by those from more zealous times, preserved in devotional literature. Of course this artificial method of heating is liable to abuses. Some churches mine from Scripture a rather bituminous fuel, and do not use sufficient draft of thought to consume it thoroughly, but worship in too sulphurous an atmosphere. Some prefer very light fuel, so that their fire roars lustily for a time, nearly burning them up, and then goes out, perhaps leaving the weaker souls to take cold. Liberal sects are apt to go to the other extreme. They affect the solid anthracite of truth, shun sensational kindlings, try to strike fire from philosophic flint with the steel of intellect, — hence seldom get too much heat, and generally not half enough. They have not even the furnace of a common faith, but, in their freedom of thought, bring each his own individual belief, — as our grandmothers brought their foot-stoves.

But like the latter, they find help even in coming together. For feeling and thought, like warmth and light, are increased by sharing. Sentiments and ideas, — unlike dollars, — are still retained while given away; so that, when men unite, each keeps his own and gains

the others', just as when they bring their lamps together. They even arouse each other; as in Carlyle's figure of the coals of fire, which soon go out when separated, but burst into a flame when put together. Souls, when isolated, grow dull and die; so that the sagacious sailor said to Lowell, "Without society a man does not know half the time whether he is alive or not." But by union they keep alive and kindle each other to a higher life. The proverb says, When hand grasps hand, one and one are more than two. In the arithmetic of hearts, $2 + 2 = 5$, and $3 \times 5 = 20$. The meeting multiplies the power of its members, — of the speaker also, if there be one. The preacher of the story thanked the Lord that he had a large audience, since he did not have talent enough to satisfy a small one. By association we help each other, help the cause, help ourselves, — save ourselves. For we can still keep the old phrase and say that, by uniting with the church, we "save our souls"; — save them not from foolish flames and fears, but from the death of indifference, and to that higher life which comes only by helping each other and uniting in a common cause.

But with association must of course go work, to keep a healthy warmth. Heat is "a mode of motion," and is produced by motion. Whatever our church

shelter, we must keep moving, and be warmed by our own activity. The doctors tell us not to sit by the fire too much, but to use good food, take abundant exercise, and carry our own heat within us. Religion must not breathe the close air of a sect, sit around the church stove or depend on the pulpit for warmth, but have abundant work, and do it. The wood-chopper cares little for fire, so long as he has good food and swings his axe. If we will take proper spiritual diet, — not mere sentimental soup or theologic crusts, but the varied food of truth which fills the world; if we will take healthy exercise in the open air of life, and be active in good works; — we shall not feel the cold, but shall gain an inner warmth that can endure any weather.

Of course, we cannot get it without sacrifice. That is the lesson of heat. No physical warmth without consuming something, whether fuel in the furnace or food in the body. No spiritual warmth without consuming ourselves, "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it." Spiritual life comes only by sacrifice. Remembering this, we can keep warm through the winter of the new religious year, and find it the healthiest season of all.

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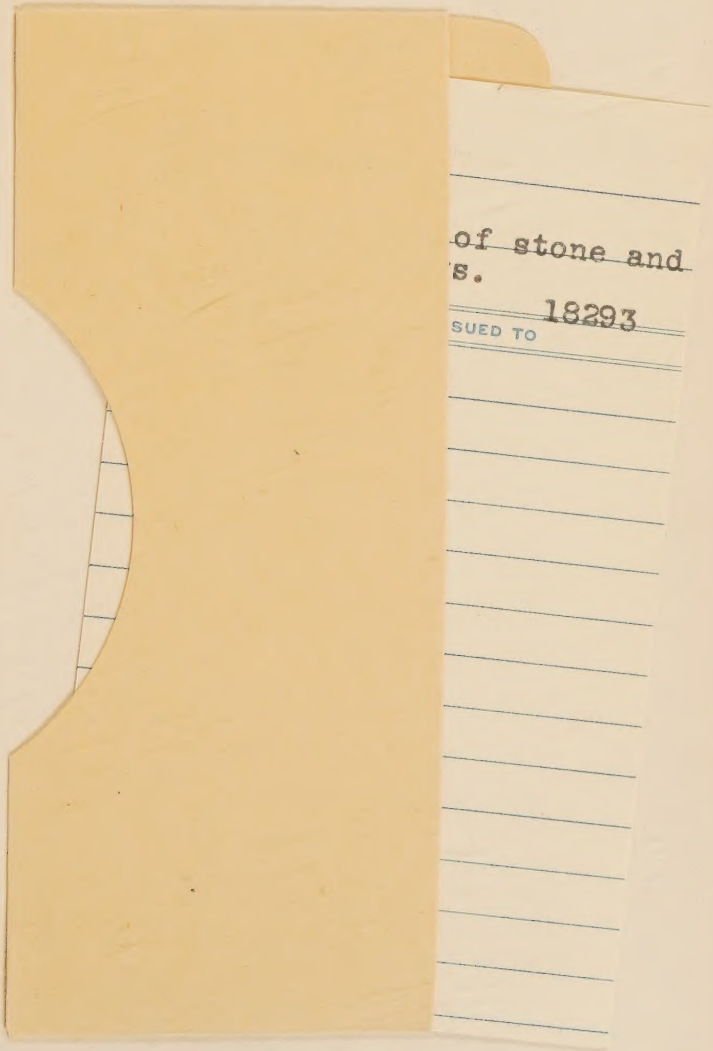
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